In the Name of Allah,
the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

قـال الله تـعـالـي:

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾

Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification.

(Sūrat al-Aḥzāb 33: 33).

Prophetic traditions mentioned in both in Sunnī and Shī'ah authoritative reference books of ḥadīth and tafsīr (exegesis of the Qur'an) have confirmed that this holy verse was revealed to exclusively refer to the People of the Cloak [ahl al-kisā'], viz. Muḥammad, 'Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn ('a) as the Ahl al-Bayt (People of the Household). For instance, refer to the following references: Sunnī: Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), al-Musnad, 1: 231; 4: 107; 6: 292, 304; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (d. 261 AH), 7: 130; Al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 AH), Sunan, 5: 361 et al.; Al-Dūlābī (d. 310 AH), Al-Dhuriyyah al-Ṭāhirah al-Nabawiyyah, p. 108; Al-Nasā'ī (d. 303 AH), Al-Sunan al-Kubrā', 5: 108; 113; Al-Ḥakīm al-Nayshābūrī (d. 405 AH), Al-Mustadrak 'ala' ṣ-Ṣahīḥayn, 2: 416, 3: 133, 146-147; Al-Zarkashī (d. 794 AH), Al-Burhān, p. 197; Ibn Hājar al-Asqalānī (d. 852 AH), Fatḥ al-Barī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 7: 104.

Shī'ah: Al-Kulaynī (d. 328 AH), Uṣūl al-Kāfī, 1: 287; Ibn Babawayh (d. 329 AH), Al-Imāmah wa' t-Tabṣīrah, p. 47, ḥadīth 29; Al-Maghribī (d. 363 AH), Da'ā'im al-Islām, pp. 35, 37; Al-Ṣādūq (d. 381 AH), Al-Khiṣāl, pp. 403, 550; Al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 AH), Al-Amalī, ḥadīth 438, 482, 783.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse recorded in the following books of *tafsīr*: Al-Jassās (d. 370 AH), *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*; Al-Wāḥidī (d. 468 AH), *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*; Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH), *Zād al-Masīr*; Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 AH), *Al-Jāmi' Li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Tha'labī (d. 825 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Ṭabarī (d. 875 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH), *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*; Al-Shawkānī (d. 1250 AH), *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*; Al-'Ayyāshī (d. 320 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Qummī (d. 329 AH), *Tafsīr*; Furt al-Kūfī (d. 352 AH), *Tafsīr* at the margin of the exegesis of *Sūrat al-Nisā'* verse 59; Al-Ṭabarsī (d. 560 AH), *Majma' al-Bayān*, as well as many other sources

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قال رسول الله ﷺ:

"إني تارك فيكُمُ الثَقلين: كتاب الله، وعترتي أهلَ بيتي، ما إن تمسكتُم بهما لن تضلوا أبداً وأنَّهُما لَن يَفترِقا حتّى يردا عَليَّ الحوضَ"

The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said: "Verily, I am leaving among you two precious things [*thaqalayn*]: The Book of Allah and my progeny [*'itratī*], the members of my Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [*ḥawḍ*] (of *Kawthar*)."

Some references:

Al-Ḥākim an-Nayshābūrī, *Al-Mustadrak 'alā'ṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Beirut), vol. 3, pp. 109-110, 148, 533

Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, (English translation), book 31, *h□adīth*s 5920-3

At-Tirmidhī, *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 621-2, *h□adīth*s 3786, 3788; vol. 2, p. 219

An-Nasā'ī, Khaṣā'iṣ 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, h□adīth 79

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26; vol. 3, pp. 26, 59; vol. 4, p. 371; vol. 5, pp. 181-182, 189-190

Ibn al-'Athīr, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 277

Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nihāyah*, vol. 5, p. 209

Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, vol. 6, p. 199

Naṣīr ad-Dīn al-Albanī, *Silsilāt al-Aḥādīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (Kuwait: Ad-Dār aṣ-Ṣalāfiyyah), vol. 4, pp. 355-358.

The Concept of
EXPLICIT STATEMENTS ON
Imamate in the Holy Qur'¡n

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Translated by:
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Cultural Affairs Department, the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) World Assembly

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THE CONCEPT OF EXPLICIT STATEMENTS ON IMAMATE IN THE HOLY QUR'¡N
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PREFACE

The invaluable legacy of the Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*] of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all), as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has provided the Muslim *ummah* with many scholars whom, following in the footsteps of Imāms of the Prophet's Household (*'a*), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well-reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) has embarked on a defence of the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) and the disciples of their school of thought in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship and appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to healthy minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Shīʻah writers and those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in editing and publishing valuable works by leading Shīʻah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the School of the Prophet's Household (*ʻa*) has offered to the entire world.

The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly looks forward to benefit from the opinions of the readers and their suggestions and constructive criticism in this area.

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Prophet Muḥammad (*ṣ*).

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imām al-Mahdī, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to Ayatullah Muhsin Araki author of the present book, and Islamic Ahl al-Bayt Foundation-London its translator. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation Office.

Cultural Affairs Department
The Ahl al-Bayt (ʻa) World Assembly

PREAMBLE

The issue of Imamate in Islam is not only concerned with inculcating the doctrine of Islam, but it also deals with, firstly, marking out the concept of Islam in general and, secondly, defining its reality and applicable examples, not to mention the theological, philosophical, and jurisprudential deductions that can be concluded from the study of Imamate at the level of theoretical and academic research.

The concept of citing Imamate in binding Qur'¡nic texts has a close relationship with the lives of human beings, both as individuals and as societies, and attaches them to their God so broadly that it includes all of their intentional and unintentional actions and introduces the worship of God as thorough submission, in whatever man chooses and desires, to the will of God in whatever He chooses and wills.

According to this idea, Allah the Almighty is not a deity who is worshipped solely through regular rituals and devotional acts, nor restricted between the walls of mosques and temples, nor glorified in the same way as chiefs and forefathers are glorified, nor confined to the ancient days, nor prohibited from acting freely in the universe and in the affairs of present-day man, nor is He a mythical deity who comes only in fairy tales about the past. Likewise, Allah, according to the idea of citing Imamate in binding divine texts, is not the god of the dead, the feeble, the oppressed, and the losers, nor is He that god who has no role at all in the affairs of human beings and their worldly existence, nor is He that god

who, in His elevated heavens, towers over the events that take place on the earth but never interferes in them, nor is He that god who is banned from speaking to man except through quiet exhortation and soft words, lest he may hurt the feelings of the arrogant and tyrannical people who play with the destinies of the inhabitants of this planet as they wish!

On the other hand, those who adopt the opposing concept, which entails that, immediately after the age of direct Divine Revelation, Allah abandoned the earth and stopped running its affairs, and thus the Heavens did not interfere in the issue of the leadership of the community after the passing away of the Holy Prophet, and Allah has nothing to do with the issue of leading humanity on the earth since the termination of the age of the Divine Revelation – those who adopt this concept had to face such a bitter contradiction that they could not find themselves any logic-based way out of it. They thus found themselves restricted between two ideas: first; the clear-cut idea about Allah the Almighty, as presented in the Holy Qur'¡n, and the idea of perfect and thorough worship of Him, on the basis of which the Holy Qur'¡n aims at elevating man and establishing a society of perfect justice on the earth, on the one hand, and, second; the claim that Allah the Almighty neglected and forsook the issue of succession to the Holy Prophet and opened its door to everyone, including those whose conduct was contradictory to what Allah the Almighty has decreed through the laws and regulations that He revealed, as well as those the obedience to whom is incompatible with the obedience to the Almighty.

If one opens his eyes wide at the events that took place after the passing away of the Holy Prophet, which resulted

in that only three months later, tyrannical rulers repressively took hold of the Muslims' necks, despised the dignities and honours of the people, eradicated the righteous, stamped out those who used to enjoin the right and forbid evil, and played with the destinies, fortunes, and wealth of the Muslim community so mischievously that the people whom Allah the Almighty had honoured due to their obedience to Him and whom He graced by sending to them His Prophet, became the victims of humility, discrepancy and retardation, not to mention other elements of extreme humiliation. Yet, Allah the Almighty had already warned these people that, if they would forsake His religion and disobey His Messenger, they would most surely see humiliation and experience disgraceful degradation. If regards these events that have resulted in the current bitter consequence, one will understand that these events are sufficient proof on the inaccuracy and falsity of the concept of God's negligence and abandonment of the issue of the next leadership after the Holy Prophet, and one will discover the authenticity of Allah's saying,

﴿وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ ۗ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ ٱلْخِيَرَةُ ۚ سُبْحَٰنَ ٱللَّهِ وَتَعَٰلَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ﴾

"Your Lord creates and chooses anything He wishes; while they have no choice. Praise be to God; Exalted is He over anything they may associate with Him!"

﴿وَرَبُّكَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ﴾

"Your Lord knows anything their breasts conceal and anything they may disclose."

﴿وَهُوَ ٱللَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ لَهُ ٱلْحَمْدُ فِى ٱلْأُولَىٰ وَٱلْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَلَهُ ٱلْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾

"He is God [Alone]; there is no deity except Him! Praise belongs to Him from the very first as well as in the Hereafter. Discretion is His, and to Him will you (all) return."[1]

Because of their meticulous care in safeguarding the roots and the future of the divine message, the divinely-ordained leaders (i.e. Imams), after the passing away of the Holy Prophet, had to act with the illegitimate ruling authorities in such a way that saved the foundations and roots of the divine message from eradication, working on leaving no room for any doubt that would be suggested to the Holy Prophet whom was sent by Allah the Almighty with that message. Thus, the situation of these divinely-chosen leaders after the era of the Holy Messenger was very difficult, because they found themselves between two choices, one of which was worse than the other:

(1) They would either insist on declaring the divine ordinance (of nominating them as the successors to the Holy Prophet in the leadership of the Muslim community) revealing the reality of Imamate after the Holy Prophet, and maintain emphatically the divine texts about their leadership, which all Muslims had heard from the Holy Prophet but they then saw some people who were close companions of him violate the Prophet's orders and openly deny them, and these Muslims were too weak to stand by these orders and the ones meant by them; or,

1. Quran *Qasas 28/68-70*.

(2) they would neglect to explain the details of one of the most imperative pillars of the religion; namely, Imamate and leadership of the Muslim community.

If they would neglect so, they would have exposed the whole religion to perdition and the future of the Muslim community to many perils and corruptive consequences their bad effects thereof that none but Allah the Almighty would be able to assess.

Yet again, if the true leaders of the Muslim community had insisted on this declaration and challenged those who had cunningly seized power and usurped authority over Muslims, this would have most surely have caused that the ruling authorities would suggest doubts not only to the divine texts of nominating these persons to the leadership of the Muslim community, but also to the words of the Holy Prophet as a whole and would accuse him of things that are in violation of his sinlessness, infallibility, and credibility in what he conveyed from Allah the Almighty.

Such conclusion is not improbable, because those who seized power and became the ruling authorities had already had precedents in challenging the Holy Prophet and doubting the soundness of his judgments.

Once, the Holy Prophet asked them to bring him a pen and paper so that he would write down a document for them that would forever save them from deviation, but one of these people challenged the Holy Prophet by saying, "The man is hallucinating!"[1] or, "The man is overcome by his

1. ¯a¦¢¦ *al-Bukh¡r¢* 2:120; ¯a¦¢¦ *Muslim* (Section: *tark al-wa¥iyyah*).

ailment, and we do not need such a document. Sufficient to us is the Book of Allah!"[1]

If such doubts had been suggested by one of those people who were considered intimate companions of the Holy Prophet, the door of doubting the Holy Prophet's words and deeds, as well as his message, would have been opened wide, and this would have caused the message of Islam to fade and the pillars of the religion to be destroyed from their foundations.

However, if the divinely-chosen leaders neglected to clarify this important pillar of the religion, this would also expose the future of Islam and the Muslim community to such bitter consequences which would not be less dangerous than the termination of the religion from its roots. In view of that, the divinely-chosen leaders had no other way than taking an in-between course that would keep them away from any direct clash with the ruling authorities and allow them to promulgate the truth that was carried to the Holy Prophet through the Divine Revelation concerning the next leadership and Imamate. Accordingly, they, along with the cherished companions of the Holy Prophet who maintained the true faith, started disseminating the Holy Prophet's words and confirmations about the next leadership so gently that they could avoid the ruling authority's reaction. These Prophetic words and traditions were of two categories; one category included the texts that were applications of what Allah the Almighty had revealed in the Qur'¡n with regard to Imamate, and the other category held the Holy Prophet's explanations of the facts that the Divine

1. ¯*a¦¢¦ al-Bukh¡r¢* 2:22-3.

Revelation particularized minutely and declared Imamate, which was the style used by the Holy Qur'¡n with regard to this issue.

In other words, in His unassailable Book, Allah the Almighty used a special style characterized by eloquence and clarification on one hand, in order to thrash out the issue of Imamate and make it attainable by everyone who seeks the truth, and, on the other hand, evaded any direct clash with those who aspired after seizing the Holy Prophet's authority after his passing away and impatiently awaited his departure in order to jump on his power, after they had been deprived by him of any leading position.

Moreover, these people deemed unbearable to submit to the leadership of the well-qualified and virtuous leaders from the members of the Holy Prophet's household whom Almighty Allah chose for Imamate and purified thoroughly from any form of corruption.

If one looks deeply into the Book of Allah and the verses therein and removes the screens of personal desire and fanaticism from one's sight, one will undoubtedly put one's hand on a huge number of clear-cut verses that discuss the issue of the divinely-ordained Imamate along with its general concept, rules, details, and applicable examples, and one will unquestionably stumble on the fact that the core of monotheism in the Holy Qur'¡n can be summed up in the divinely-commissioned leadership and Imamate that would continue throughout ages and play a major role in the phases of human life since the dawn of history up to its end, when Allah the Almighty will inherit the earth and whoever exists thereon.

During the blessed month of Rama¤¡n, I had the opportunity to discuss some of the Qur'¡nic texts about the issue of Imamate with some educated and well-informed people in London, in AH 1418 (circa 1999), where I delivered four lectures in D¡r al-Isl¡m Hall under the title: "Imamate in the texts of the Holy Qur'¡n." Some of the attendants took the trouble of writing down these lectures on papers, making use of audio recordings. When these papers were presented to me, I reviewed, made changes to the points that required changing, and completed the other parts that required completion. Thus, the result was the current book.

To end with, I pray to Allah the Almighty to accept this work from me with the most excellent manner of His acceptance and to cause it to be beneficial for the believers and the truth-seekers. Verily, Allah is Hearer of prayers, Nigh, and Answering.

Mu¦sin al-Ar¡k¢

FIRST TOPIC

MEANING OF IMAMATE IN THE HOLY QUR'ªN

Our discourse on Imamate in this book comprises a number of topics, the first of which deals with the meaning of Imamate in the Holy Qur'¡n.

By Imamate, the Holy Qur'¡n means leading human beings to the climax of perfection as much as they can attain.

As posed by the Holy Qur'¡n, Imamate is not only religious leadership, i.e. guiding others in devotional acts, nor is it a leadership solely in mundane affairs, but its meaning is so comprehensive that it covers the notion of leading human beings in all of their intentional actions. In plain words, Imamate is to lead and guide human beings in every action that can be steered to be good or bad, just or unjust, right or wrong, and guiding or misleading, including all of their collective, individual, this-worldly, and other worldly actions.

QUALIFICATIONS OF IMAMATE IN THE HOLY QUR'ªN

In order to reach at an exact meaning of Imamate as presented in the Holy Qur'¡n, we have to highlight the following three points that have been introduced in the Holy Qur'¡n as qualifications of Imamate:

First: Imamate must be so all-comprehensive that it comprises all actions about which human beings may disagree; i.e. the intentional actions, because disagreement

about something usually stems from man's freewill, since unintentional actions are not subject to disagreement as they exist in human beings equally and have the same reactions and consequences for all human beings.

When two men disagree on an action, this means that each one of them wants to do something that the other does not want to do. According to this meaning, disagreement is part of the intentional actions, whereas no one disagrees with another about an unintentional action (such as breathing and heart beating); therefore, these unintentional actions can be described as monotonous.

Second: Imamate, in the sense of leadership and guidance, includes all acts that can be fair or unfair.

Third: In the divinely-ordained Imamate, there is no difference between individuals and communities, mundane and religious affairs, and spiritual and material actions. Hence, Imamate covers all human beings as individuals and as societies in all of their intentional actions.

In the survey of the Qur'¡nic texts about Imamate that will be cited in the coming pages of this book, we will hit upon verses that confirm these three qualifications with regard to Imamate.

What's more, the notion of Imamate as presented by the Holy Qur'¡n can serve by itself as evidence of the indispensable necessity of the existence of Qur'¡nic texts that name the Imams and introduce them as appointed by Allah the Almighty, because man, in his intentional actions that are supposed to lead him to virtue and perfection, does not have the faculty to recognize those

who guide him towards these supreme qualities through any means except the divine revelation and the divine nomination of these guides.

In this respect, Allah the Almighty says (in the Holy Qur'¡n),

﴿فَلَا تُزَكُّوا۟ أَنفُسَكُمْ ۖ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ ٱتَّقَىٰ﴾

"Do not try to justify yourselves; He is quite Aware as to who has done his duty."[1]

﴿بَلِ ٱللَّهُ يُزَكِّى مَن يَشَآءُ﴾

"...and God will purify anyone He wishes to."[2]

Let us now begin with perusing the holy Qur'¡nic verses through which we will be able to define Imamate along with its three qualifications, which have been previously cited. In this manner, we will also have some words about a set of Qur'¡nic texts.

Allah the Almighty says,

﴿أَمِ ٱتَّخَذُوا۟ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ فَٱللَّهُ هُوَ ٱلْوَلِىُّ وَهُوَ يُحْىِ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾

"Why, have they adopted other patrons instead of Him? God is the [Only] Patron; He revives the dead; He is Capable of everything!"

﴿وَمَا ٱخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِن شَىْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُۥٓ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمُ ٱللَّهُ رَبِّى عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ﴾

1. Quran *Najm 53/32*.
2. Quran *Nisa 4/49*.

"No matter what you (all) may have differed over in any way, its jurisdiction still [remains] up to God. Such is God, my Lord; on Him have I relied and to Him do I refer."[1]

Plainly and directly, this holy verse highlights two meanings:

First: The true guardian is none but Allah; therefore, man is not allowed to betake himself any other guardian than Allah.

Second: The judgment about whatever is disagreed upon must be relegated to Allah alone, because the most accurate judgment about disagreements rests with Him only.

By adding these two meanings to one another, the conclusion will be this: Allah alone is the guardian over all things, and He is the final Judge; therefore, no one has the right to undertake the mission of running or governing the affairs of people. Besides, Allah's absolute guardianship over people and governing their affairs are not restricted to a certain field of human life; rather, it includes all fields of disagreement; i.e. all intentional actions that man chooses according to the factors and aspects that orientate his will. In fact, an intentional action is that thing upon which people may disagree because of the difference of their desires, needs, inclinations, and the factors affecting these inclinations.

If we combine the purports held by two more Qur'¡nic verses from S£rah al-M¡'idah to the meanings of the

1. Quran *Sh£r¡ 42/9-10.*

aforesaid verses, we will come upon a perfect portrait of Imamate as introduced by the Holy Qur'¡n. These two verses are the following:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمْ رَٰكِعُونَ﴾

"Your Patron is God [Alone], as well as His messenger and those who believe-who keep up prayer, pay the welfare tax and bow their heads [in worship]."

﴿وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ ٱللَّهِ هُمُ ٱلْغَٰلِبُونَ﴾

"Anyone who enlists God as a patron, and His messenger and those who believe, [will find] God's side will be victorious!"[1]

These two holy verses state that the guardianship (*wil¡yah*) of Allah, His Messenger, and the Believers is so absolute that it does not involve a certain field or a certain issue; rather, it includes all fields and all issues.

Allah the Almighty also says,

﴿وَإِذِ ٱبْتَلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ رَبُّهُۥ بِكَلِمَٰتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّى جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۖ قَالَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِى ۖ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ﴾

"When his Lord tested Abraham by means of [certain] words, and he fulfilled them, He said: "I am going to make you into a leader for mankind." He said: "What about my offspring?" He said: "My pledge does not apply to evildoers."[2]

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1. Quran *M¡'idah 6/55-6*.
2. Quran *Baqara 2/124*.

According to this holy Qur'¡nic verse, Allah the Almighty has decided Imamate to include unconditionally all affairs that require a leader (*Imam*). Thus, the verse can be interpreted as such: I will make you *Imam* (leader and guide) to all things in which people require an *imam*.

In this way, Imamate, as represented by the Holy Qur'¡n, is not restricted to this-worldly affairs, or the other worldly affairs, or the social affairs, or the individual affairs… etc.

The Almighty also says,

﴿إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ ٱللَّهُ﴾

"We have sent the Book down to you with the Truth so that you may judge among mankind by means of what God has shown you."[1]

In this verse, the addressee is the Holy Prophet, and the verse means: You may judge between people in all affairs that require judgment.

Apparently, this judgment is absolute, in the sense that it is not restricted to a certain or special affair. Hence, the Holy Prophet has been ordered to judge between people in every question they encounter.

The Almighty also says,

﴿يا أَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ أَطِيعُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا۟ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ﴾

"You who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger and those from among you who hold command."[1]

1. Quran *Nisa' 4/105.*

In this holy verse, the decree of obedience is absolute too, which thus means that people must obey these people, besides Allah the Almighty, in whatever they order them to do.

Concisely, the Holy Qur'¡n has not restricted the decree of obedience to a certain matter or situation, and this comes to mean that obedience that we have been ordered by the Almighty to show to these people, besides Him, must include all fields and affairs that are subjected to "dos and don'ts."

It is worth mentioning here that the Holy Qur'¡n's interest in the question of Imamate is by no means less than its interest in the question of God's Unity (i.e. monotheism), and the Qur'¡nic verses about Imamate are not less in number and value than these appertained to the belief of God's Oneness, since, on most occasions, we find that the Holy Qur'¡n refers to the issue of Imamate and the divinely-commissioned leadership immediately after its references to the belief in God's Oneness. An instance of this is the following portion of S£rah al-Nis¡':

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغۡفِرُ أَن يُشۡرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغۡفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَمَن يُشۡرِكۡ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ ٱفۡتَرَىٰٓ إِثۡمًا عَظِيمًا﴾

"God does not forgive anyone for associating something with Him, While He does forgive whomever He wishes to for anything besides that. Anyone who gives God associates has invented such an awful offence!"

1. Quran *Nisa' 4/59.*

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ يُزَكُّونَ أَنفُسَهُم ۚ بَلِ ٱللَّهُ يُزَكِّى مَن يَشَآءُ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا﴾

"Have you not seen those who purify themselves? Indeed God will purify anyone He wishes to, and they will not be harmed one bit."

﴿ٱنظُرْ كَيْفَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ ٱلْكَذِبَ ۖ وَكَفَىٰ بِهِۦٓ إِثْمًا مُّبِينًا﴾

"Look how they invent a lie about God! That is enough in itself as a clear offence."

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ نَصِيبًا مِّنَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱلْجِبْتِ وَٱلطَّٰغُوتِ وَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ أَهْدَىٰ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ سَبِيلًا﴾

"Have you not watched those who were given a portion of the Book? They believe in witchcraft and arrogant leaders and tell those who disbelieve: "Those are better guided to a way than are the ones who believe."

﴿أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ ۖ وَمَن يَلْعَنِ ٱللَّهُ فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُۥ نَصِيرًا﴾

"Those are the ones whom God has cursed; anyone God has cursed will never find a supporter for himself."

﴿أَمْ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّنَ ٱلْمُلْكِ فَإِذًا لَّا يُؤْتُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ نَقِيرًا﴾

"Or have they any share in control? Why, they will not give a speck to anybody!"

﴿ أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ عَلَىٰ مَآ ءَاتَىٰهُمُ ٱللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِۦ ۖ فَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَآ ءَالَ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَءَاتَيْنَٰهُم مُّلْكًا عَظِيمًا ﴾

"Or do they envy people because of what God has given them out of His bounty? We already gave Abraham's

family the Book and wisdom, and We gave them splendid control."

﴿فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ ءَامَنَ بِهِۦ وَمِنْهُم مَّن صَدَّ عَنْهُ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِجَهَنَّمَ سَعِيراً﴾

"Some of them believed in it while others of them blocked it out. Hell will suffice as a blaze!"

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا سَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِمْ نَارًا كُلَّمَا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُم بَدَّلْنَٰهُمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا۟ ٱلْعَذَابَ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا﴾

"Those who disbelieve in Our signs We will roast in a Fire: each time their hides are toasted, We shall exchange them for some other skins so they may taste the torment [again]. God is Powerful, Wise."

﴿وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدًا ۖ لَّهُمْ فِيهَآ أَزْوَٰجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ ۖ وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا ظَلِيلًا﴾

"We will show those who believe and perform honourable actions into gardens through which rivers flow, to live there for ever, they will have clean-living spouses there, and We will show them into shady nooks."

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَن تُؤَدُّوا۟ ٱلْأَمَٰنَٰتِ إِلَىٰٓ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُم بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ أَن تَحْكُمُوا۟ بِٱلْعَدْلِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُم بِهِۦٓ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًۢا بَصِيراً﴾

"God orders you to restore deposits entrusted [to you] to their [rightful] owners. Whenever you judge between people, you should judge with [a sense of] justice. How superbly God instructs you to do so; God is Alert, Observant!"

﴿يا أَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ أَطِيعُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا۟ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ ۖ فَإِن تَنَٰزَعْتُمْ فِى شَىْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱلرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا﴾

"You who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger and those from among you who hold command. If you should quarrel over anything, refer it to God and the Messenger if you believe in God and the Last Day; that will be better, and finer in the long run."

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَن يَتَحَاكَمُوٓا۟ إِلَى ٱلطَّٰغُوتِ وَقَدْ أُمِرُوٓا۟ أَن يَكْفُرُوا۟ بِهِۦ وَيُرِيدُ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ أَن يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلَٰلًۢا بَعِيدًا﴾

"Have you not considered those who claim they believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you? They want to seek judgment from arrogant leaders and so they are ordered to disbelieve in it. Satan wants to lead them far astray."

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا۟ إِلَىٰ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ وَإِلَى ٱلرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ ٱلْمُنَٰفِقِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنكَ صُدُودًا﴾

"Whenever someone tells them: "Come to what God has sent down, and to the Messenger," you will see hypocrites barring the way for you."

﴿فَكَيْفَ إِذَآ أَصَٰبَتْهُم مُّصِيبَةٌۢ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ جَآءُوكَ يَحْلِفُونَ بِٱللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَآ إِلَّآ إِحْسَٰنًا وَتَوْفِيقًا﴾

"How will it be when some disaster strikes them because of what their hands have already prepared? Then they will come to you swearing by God: "We only wanted to have kindness and success!"

﴿أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ ٱللَّهُ مَا فِى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ وَقُل لَّهُمْ فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًۢا بَلِيغًا﴾

"Those are the ones whom God knows what their hearts contain, so shun them and reprove them. Give them a convincing statement about themselves."

﴿وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذ ظَّلَمُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَهُمْ جَآءُوكَ فَٱسْتَغْفَرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيمًا﴾

"We have not sent any messenger unless he was to be obeyed in accordance with God's permission. If they had come to you and sought forgiveness from God whenever they harmed themselves, and the Messenger had prayed for forgiveness for them, they would have found that God is Ever-Turning, Merciful."

﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا۟ فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا۟ تَسْلِيمًا﴾

"Yet by your Lord, they will never believe until they name you to judge concerning what they are quarrelling over among themselves; then they will find no inconvenience for themselves concerning whatever you have decided, and will accept it wholeheartedly."

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنِ ٱقْتُلُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَكُمْ أَوِ ٱخْرُجُوا۟ مِن دِيَٰرِكُم مَّا فَعَلُوهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا۟ مَا يُوعَظُونَ بِهِۦ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيتًا﴾

"If We had prescribed for them: "Let yourselves be killed or expelled from your homes," only a few of them would have done so. If they had done what they were instructed to do, it would have been better for them, as well as more stabilizing:..."

﴿وَإِذًا لآتَيْنَٰهُم مِّن لَّدُنَّا أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾

"...then We would have given them splendid earnings from Our very presence..."

﴿وَلَهَدَيْنَٰهُمْ صِرَٰطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا﴾

"...and guided them to a Straight Road."

﴿وَمَن يُطِعِ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلرَّسُولَ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ مَعَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ ٱلنَّبِيِينَ وَٱلصِّدِّيقِينَ وَٱلشُّهَدَاءِ وَٱلصَّٰلِحِينَۚ وَحَسُنَ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ رَفِيقًا﴾

"Anyone who obeys God and the Messenger stands by those whom God has favoured, such as prophets, loyal persons, martyrs and honourable men. How fine are such companions!"[1]

This Qur'¡nic portion begins with demonstrating the notion of God's Oneness (*Nisa 4/48*) and then it moves to demonstrating the issue of Imamate. This inseparability between the two notions reveals confirmedly that the belief in God's Oneness cannot be practically perfected unless it is understood within the progress of belief in and compliance with the Imamate and the divinely-commissioned leadership.

Very often, we find in the Holy Qur'¡n texts that emphasize the goals, purports, and limits of Imamate along with the duties of people towards it. For instance, the Holy Qur'¡n reads in S£rah al-°ad¢d,

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ ٱلنَّاسُ بِٱلْقِسْطِ﴾

1. Quran *Nisa 4/48-69*.

"We have sent Our messengers with explanations, and sent the Book and the Balance down along with them, so that mankind may conduct themselves with all fairness."[1]

It is understood from this holy verse that the leadership, mission, and Imamate of the Messengers are all aimed at guiding the people to conduct themselves with equity. Thus, these messengers and their successors are the leaders and guides in all things that have something to do with equity, because the messengers have been sent and ordered to make the people stand with justice. In other words, the Imams are custodians over whatever provides the people with equity, establishes justice among them, and removes any item of injustice.

Generally speaking, all the Qur'¡nic verses that hold instructions of obedience to Allah the Almighty and His Messengers carry absolute, but not restricted, notions.

For instance, the Holy Qur'¡n reads,

﴿أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلرَّسُولَ﴾

"Obey God and the Messenger."[2]

Expressing the words of the major Prophets and Messengers within their guiding discourses with their people, the Holy Qur'¡n says,

﴿فَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ﴾

"Heed God and obey me"[1]

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1. Qur'an *Hadid 57/25*.
2. Qur'an *Aal-imran 3/32*.

We cannot find in the entire Qur'¡n a single verse that restricts the meaning of "*obey me*" to otherworldly affairs, post-grave affairs, or the affairs appertained to devotional acts, or the like; rather, whenever the expression, "*obey me*", is mentioned, it comes in such an absolute notion that includes this-worldly and otherworldly affairs.

For instance, quoting Prophet ¯¡li¦, the Almighty says,

﴿فَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ﴾

"Heed God and obey me..."[2]

﴿وَلَا تُطِيعُوٓاْ أَمۡرَ ٱلۡمُسۡرِفِينَ﴾

"do not obey the order of extravagant people..."

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يُفۡسِدُونَ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَلَا يُصۡلِحُونَ﴾

"...who corrupt [things] on earth and never reform."[3]

This holy verse means that you, people, should obey me alone and disobey the mischief-makers.

To explain the verse more elaborately, the Prophet ¯¡li¦ says to his people: I have come to you only to guide you in this life, to govern your affairs (with justice), and to prevent you from obeying the arrogant ones and the mischief-makers.

In its Qur'¡nic notion, Imamate is a general administration of the mundane and religious, and this-worldly and otherworldly affairs. To express the same idea in other words, Imamate stands for leading humankind in their

1. Qur'an *Shu`ara 26/150.*
2. Qur'an *Shu`ara 26/150.*
3. Qur'an *Shu`ara 26/150-152.*

intentional actions towards the peak of divinely intended perfection.

This is the meaning of Imamate according to the Holy Qur'¡n.

IMAMATE AND THE REALITY OF BELIEF IN ALLAH AS THE ONE AND ONLY GOD

Many Qur'¡nic verses imply that obedience, guardianship, commandment, and authority are Allah's alone; so, He has no partner in judging and no partner in issuing commandment. Just as we are not allowed to set a partner with the Almighty in worship, such as by worshipping something or someone else besides Him, we are also prohibited from obeying anyone besides Allah or obeying Him along with someone else. Thus, obedience must be to Allah alone. On the strength of this fact, it is unavoidable that Allah the Almighty nominates one of His servants as a leader, and decrees that obedience to this leader is the same as obedience to Him or, in other words, there must be a leader appointed by Allah Who must also order the people to obey him, so that the belief in Allah as the One and Only God and the One and Only Obeyed can be achieved through obedience to that leader, which is thus considered obedience to Allah the Almighty.

From this premise, we can conclude that belief in Allah as the Worshipped One and Only is, in reality, represented by the belief in Him as the One and Only Obeyed, and there is no way to obey Almighty Allah alone except through obeying the leader that is appointed by Allah – a leader who never orders or prohibits something unless this achieves the pleasure of Allah.

Let us now refer to a few of the numerous Qur'¡nic texts that stress the fact that none should be obeyed except Allah and that all judgment, authority, commandment, and guardianship are only resting with Allah Who chooses whomever He wishes to govern and have authority over people:

In the field of worship, Almighty Allah quotes one of His prophets as saying,

﴿فَقَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُۥٓ ۖ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ﴾

"...he said: "My people worship God; you have no other deity except Him. Will you not do your duty?" [1]

He, the Almighty, also says,

﴿وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِى كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱجْتَنِبُوا۟ ٱلطَّٰغُوتَ﴾

"We have despatched a messenger to every nation [who said]: "Serve God [Alone] and turn aside from the Arrogant ones." [2]

What is meant by "worship" in this holy verse is submission and absolute obedience to Allah, but not only in devotional rituals and acts.

In the field of commandment, the Almighty says,

﴿ أَلَا لَهُ ٱلْخَلْقُ وَٱلْأَمْرُ﴾

"Surely creation and authority belong to Him." [3]

1. Qur'an *Mu'minun 23/23.*
2. Qur'an *Nahl 16/36.*
3. Qur'an *A`raf 7/54.*

This means that none has the right to issue commands except Allah the Almighty, and none should enjoy any authority over people except those granted authority by Allah. Thus, commandment is Allah's alone.

He, the Almighty, also says in this regard,

﴿بَل لِّلَّهِ ٱلْأَمْرُ جَمِيعًا﴾

"Rather command is wholly God's."[1]

﴿إِنِ ٱلْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ﴾

"Surely discretion belongs to Him!" [2]

﴿وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِى حُكْمِهِۦٓ أَحَدًا﴾

"...nor does He let anyone else share in His discretion."[3]

In the field of kingdom, the Almighty says,

﴿قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ ٱلنَّاسِ﴾

"Say: "I take refuge with the Lord of Mankind,

﴿مَلِكِ ٱلنَّاسِ﴾

"...the King of Mankind" [4]

Allah is then the King, the absolute Master Who issues orders and prohibitions, and the One and Only Judge. However, this does not mean that He judges, leads, orders, and prohibits by Himself, since He is not a human being or a corporeity that can be seen; therefore, it is necessary

1. Qur'an *Ra`d 13/31.*
2. Qur'an *An`am 6/57.*
3. Qur'an *Kahf 18/26.*
4. Qur'an "*N¡s/1-2*.

that He governs the affairs of His creatures, especially the human beings, through a human being like themselves, who can see them and whom they can see, who eats what they eat, and drinks what they drink, even though this human being must meet certain criteria which make him eligible to clarify Allah's judgments for the people, call them to obey Him, and lead them to whatever brings about His pleasure. In this way, obedience and submission to this divinely – appointed human leader – after he brings the people clear – cut signs and demonstrations providing overwhelming evidence that he has been designated to this office by Allah the Almighty – will be proven as obedience and submission to Allah the Almighty.

Likewise, the aforesaid divine authority does not denote a direct judgment of the Almighty; rather, it signifies the application and putting into practice the laws and regulations of the Almighty through certain persons whom He has chosen as His envoys and permitted to judge in His name. This meaning is so general that it includes not only divine governments but also positive regimes and leaderships. For instance, when we describe someone as a leader and ruler of a state, this does not necessarily mean that he undertakes all the missions of leadership and ruling single-handedly; rather, there must be other people who assist and represent him and there must also be others who work as members, agents, and managers of the bodies that implement his orders, transmit them to the masses, and run the affairs of the subjects in the light of these orders.

In other words, when people introduce a certain person as their leader, this does not mean that each one of these people has direct contact with that person; rather, that

person appoints others to issue instructions or observe the implementation of his orders on his behalf, and the orders issued by these people must be considered as their leader's orders and obedience to them must be seen as obedience to him.

In this connection, Allah the Almighty says,

﴿قُلِ ٱللَّهُمَّ مَٰلِكَ ٱلْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِى ٱلْمُلْكَ مَن تَشَآءُ وَتَنزِعُ ٱلْمُلْكَ مِمَّن تَشَآءُ﴾

"Say: "O God, Holder of control! You give control to anyone You wish and snatch control from anyone You wish."[1]

To explain, this holy verse holds that it is Allah alone Who gives or deprives of authority, and there is none save Him who can do so, since it is He, and He alone, Who "gives power to whom He pleases, and strips off power from whom He pleases, and endues with honour whom He pleases, and brings low whom He pleases. In His Hand is all good. Verily, He has power over all things."

In S£rah al-Baqarah, when relating the story of ±¡l£t (Saul), the Almighty says,

﴿وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا ۚ قَالُوٓا۟ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لَهُ ٱلْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِٱلْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِّنَ ٱلْمَالِ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُۥ بَسْطَةً فِى ٱلْعِلْمِ وَٱلْجِسْمِ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ يُؤْتِى مُلْكَهُۥ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

"Their prophet told them: "God has sent Saul as a king for you." They said: "How could he hold control over us, since we are fitter to exercise control than he is? He has not been given ample wealth." He said: "God has singled him out for you and added plenty to his

1. Qur'an *Aal-imran 3/26.*

knowledge and physique. God gives his control to anyone He wishes; God is Boundless, Aware."[1]

The last section of this holy verse straightforwardly holds that no one has the right to choose for the divinely ordained kingdom except Allah the Almighty, Who appoints whomever He wishes for His kingdom, designates whomever He wishes to this post, and gives kingdom to whomever He wishes.

The Almighty also says,

﴿وَقُلِ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِى لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ شَرِيكٌ فِى ٱلْمُلْكِ﴾

"Say: "Praise be to God Who has adopted no son and has no partner in control."[2]

﴿فَتَعَالَى ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمَلِكُ ٱلْحَقُّ﴾

"Exalted is God, the True Controller!"[3]

﴿لَهُ ٱلْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ ٱلْحَمْدُ﴾

"Control is His and praise is (also) His."[4]

﴿تَبَٰرَكَ ٱلَّذِى بِيَدِهِ ٱلْمُلْكُ﴾

"Blessed is He in Whose hands there rests control."[5]

According to the implication of this holy verse, whoever claims that any other one than Allah the Almighty has the right to have authority, or to nominate and designate to an office, or to issue orders and prohibitions has, in fact, set up a partner to the Almighty in His absolute Kingdom.

1. Qur'an *Baqarah 2/247.*
2. Qur'an *Isr¡ 17/111*.
3. Qur'an *Taha 20/114.*
4. Qur'an *Taghabun 64/*1
5. Qur'an *Mulk 67/1*.

This sort of setting a partner to the Almighty (*shirk*) enters under the section of polytheism in obedience, which is definitely rejected in the Qur'¡nic texts.

There is, however, no objection to the claim that the masses' opinion and choice plays an essential role in the establishment of the divinely-ordained authority, but this means one thing only; that is, it is necessary that the masses gather around and support the divine leadership so that this leadership will be capable of establishing justice. In other words, the divine authority and the power of the prophets can be put into practice only through the masses' will and support of the divine authority, but the source of the legality of this power and authority is still Allah's alone, since all kingdom is His alone and none save He has the right to choose individuals for holding this authority.

It happens that although a ruler has been designated by Allah the Almighty to the post of leadership, the masses may neither obey, nor support him, nor submit to his leadership. This, of course, will not strip him of the legality endowed to him by the Almighty to rule over the people, since he, under all circumstances, is still the legitimate ruler and the true Imam even if he is not given the opportunity to perform his authorities practically just because the people neither submitted to nor supported him.

The opinion of the masses is necessary for giving power and implementing the judgments issued by the divinely appointed leader, but this opinion is still not the axis around which the legitimacy of this leader revolves. In other words, the legitimacy of a leader is not subjected to

the views of the people; rather, what should revolve around the view of the masses is the influence of the ruler's authority, power, establishment of rule, and practical achievement of his government. Had it not been for the masses' obedience to and support of the ruler, he would not have been able to establish his government, no matter to what extent he is righteous and truthful in his government.

This is, in fact, a major difference between the divine view and the materialist view, which does not believe in the existence of a god who created the universe and who is running its affairs. We, who believe in and adopt the divine view of rule, thus say that there must have been truth and justice before the people chose for themselves; therefore, people are required to choose the one who represents this truth and establishes justice – a fact that is instituted by rational sentiments and human conscience.

As for the materialist view, on the other hand, it does not believe in the initial existence of such truth and justice that preceded the choice of people. If discussed, this materialist view is in its reality a destruction of morals and values from their roots. To explain, if we deny the initial existence of truth and justice before the choice of people, this will lead us to believe that there was not any sign of moral values and high standards that are worth being followed by the people and called for by reformists; rather, values and idealities become subservient to the choice of the people, whatever form these values may take and whoever these people and their rational levels may be. For instance, if under the seduction of mischief-makers and arrogant people – a matter very commonplace throughout history – people unanimously agree to the

killing of prophets and righteous people this will not be an act that is rationally condemned, because it stemmed from the will of the masses and, according to the materialistic view, whatever the masses want is true and legitimate! Thus, the missions of reformists, moralists, and educators will come to an end, and the purposes of morals and moral principles will cease to exist in human society, since there will no longer remain any goal to be sought after by the reformists or any purpose to be called for by the moralists and educators in human reality at both the individual and the social levels.

At any rate, one of the most indisputable issues that are reasoned by the moral sentiment and the human conscience is the existence of values and idealities used for expressing truth and justice; and these values must have preceded human will; and must be adopted as the decisive factor and criterion of the legitimacy of rule. In fact, these values and idealities embody the divine will. Consequently, the divine will is alone worth acting on as the absolute source of legitimacy of rule and authority. This fact has been clearly confirmed by a good number of Qur'¡nic verses, some of which have been previously cited. Yet, let us now refer to another group of verses that hold this fact:

The Almighty says,

﴿وَقُلِ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِى لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ شَرِيكٌ فِى ٱلْمُلْكِ﴾

"Say: "Praise be to God Who has adopted no son and has no partner in control."[1]

1. Qur'an *Isr¡ 17/111*.

﴿فَتَعالَى ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمَلِكُ ٱلْحَقُّ﴾

"Exalted is God, the True Controller!"[1]

﴿لَهُ ٱلْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ ٱلْحَمْدُ﴾

"Control is His and praise is (also) His."[2]

﴿تَبَٰارَكَ ٱلَّذِى بِيَدِهِ ٱلْمُلْكُ﴾

"Blessed is He in Whose hands there rests control".[3]

According to these holy Qur'¡nic verses, the entire kingdom is Allah's, and He is the One and Only King and there is no other true king in this universe than Him. This kingdom of the Almighty is not effective only in the other world, but it is also so absolute that it includes both this world and the other world, as is clearly indicated in the aforesaid verses. In addition, there are other Qur'¡nic verses that plainly and clearly state this fact, leaving no room for any opposing interpretation, such as the following:

﴿نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَفِى ٱلْآخِرَةِ﴾

"We are your sponsors during worldly life and in the Hereafter."[4]

﴿لَهُ ٱلْحَمْدُ فِى ٱلْأُولَىٰ وَٱلْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَلَهُ ٱلْحُكْمُ﴾

"Praise belongs to Him from the very first as well as in the Hereafter. Discretion is His."[5]

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1. Qur'an ±¡h¡ *20/114.*
2. Qur'an *Taghabun 64/1.*
3. Qur'an *Mulk 67/1.*
4. Qur'an *Fu¥¥ilat 41/31",*
5. Qur'an *Qa¥a¥ 28/70.*

﴿يُولِجُ ٱلَّيْلَ فِى ٱلنَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ ٱلنَّهَارَ فِى ٱلَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ ٱلشَّمْسَ وَٱلْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِى لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ ذَٰلِكُمُ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ ٱلْمُلْكُ ۚ وَٱلَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِۦ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِن قِطْمِيرٍ﴾

"He wraps night up into daytime and wraps daytime up in night, and regulates the sun and moon; each runs along on a stated course. Such is God, your Lord! Control belongs to Him; while the ones whom you appeal to instead of Him do not control a wisp."[1]

﴿وَٱللَّهُ يُؤْتِى مُلْكَهُۥ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

"God gives his control to anyone He wishes; God is Boundless, Aware."[2]

In brief, these holy Qur'¡nic verses, as well as many others, lay much stress on the issue of obeying Allah the Almighty unaccompanied, and declare that the belief of monotheism (*taw¦¢d*) in its reality stands for obeying Him alone, and this belief, in its doctrinal and devotional aspects, cannot be attained unless obedience to Allah is purified from obedience to any other than Him.

1. Qur'an *F¡§ir 35/13.*
2. Qur'an *Baqarah 2/247.*

SECOND TOPIC

VALIDITY OF IMAMATE IS CONDITIONAL ON DIVINE NOMINATION

In the previous chapter, our discussion has been focused on defining Imamate in the light of the Holy Qur'¡n where a notion of "Imamate" and "Imam" as provided in the Holy Qur'¡n has been identified. Through clear-cut points of evidence and depending upon a good number of Qur'¡nic texts, we have proven that the Holy Qur'¡n defines Imamate as guiding and leading humankind, in all of their intentional actions, to the required perfection. We have then pointed out the three qualifications of Imamate as decided by the Holy Qur'¡n.

In this chapter, we will discuss the topic of the references to Imamate in the Holy Qur'¡n or, in other expression, the concept of imposing Imamate in the Holy Qur'¡n as a post given by the Almighty alone; i.e. the concept entailing that Imamate is a divine position that Allah alone chooses for whomever He wishes. In brief, Imamate, in the sense of leadership, is valid only when it is appointed by the Almighty, but it is never left for the choice of people.

Hereinafter, the reader will learn that the Holy Qur'¡n directly highlights this notion and categorically emphasizes that Imamate is a purely divine concern and that Allah the Almighty chooses for it whomever He wishes and that He has never relegated it to the people to choose *Imams* for themselves.

Before embarking on discussing this topic, let us call attention to the fact that what has been mentioned in the

previous chapter is in itself serving as a sufficient point of evidence of the necessity of Imamate being decided by divine texts.

As has been previously cited, since Imamate is defined as leading humankind in all of their intentional affairs in line with the pleasure of the Almighty, none can choose for this Imamate except Allah the Almighty. In other words, ordinary people are not sufficiently qualified to choose for Imamate, which is intended and founded to lead man to the sought after perfection and to whatever achieves the pleasure of the Almighty in all of man's intentional affairs. According to this notion, Imamate must be completely subjected to a designation issued by Allah the Almighty.

Aside from the fact that the Qur'¡nic notion of Imamate is inseparably concomitant with the concept of imposing Imamate in the Holy Qur'¡n, the Holy Qur'¡n came to declare that Imamate must be decided according to a text issued by the Almighty.

It is worth mentioning that in a coming chapter, we will prove that the Holy Qur'¡n has not only stated and affirmed that Imamate must be decided by the Almighty through a text issued directly by Him, but the Qur'¡n has also put into practice the process of divine designation to Imamate in a special way.

Back to the main topic of this chapter, the Holy Qur'¡n is full of texts that testify to the accuracy of the concept of imposing Imamate in the Holy Qur'¡n and maintain that designation to Imamate must be issued by Allah the Almighty alone through texts released by Him.

Let us now choose a few samples of Qur'¡nic texts appertained to this topic:

1- Verses of Commandment

The following verses are indicatives of the fact that all commandments are related to Allah the Almighty alone. He thus says,

﴿بَل لِّلَّهِ ٱلْأَمْرُ جَمِيعًا﴾

"Rather command is wholly God's."[1]

He the Almighty also says,

﴿لَهُ ٱلْخَلْقُ وَٱلْأَمْرُ﴾

"Surely creation and authority belong to Him"[2]

According to Arabic grammar, a shift that is made to the grammatical order of a sentence always denotes restriction (and emphasis), such as when predicates precede subjects, prepositional phrases precede governing words – such as in the aforesaid holy verse – and objects precede subjects, such as in the following holy verse:

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

"You do we worship and You do we call on for help."[3]

Accordingly, the part of the verse under discussion means that all creation and commandment are absolutely Allah's

1. Qur'an *Ra`d 13/31.*
2. Qur'an *A`raf 7/54.*
3. Qur'an *fatihah 1/5.*

and none else at all, and no one has any choice or effective opinion in these matters.

Let us now cite the holy verse as a whole:

﴿إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ فِى سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ ٱسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى ٱلْعَرْشِ يُغْشِى ٱلَّيْلَ ٱلنَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُۥ حَثِيثًا وَٱلشَّمْسَ وَٱلْقَمَرَ وَٱلنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَٰتٍۭ بِأَمْرِهِۦٓ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ ٱلْخَلْقُ وَٱلْأَمْرُ ۗ تَبَارَكَ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ﴾

"Your Lord is God, Who created Heaven and Earth in six days; then He mounted on the Throne. He wraps night up with daytime, seeking it automatically. The sun, moon and stars are regulated by His command. Surely creation and authority belong to Him. Blessed be God, Lord of the Universe!"[1]

This holy verse generally denotes that everything on this globe is subservient to the command of Allah the Almighty, including creation and order, since He is the only One Who lays down laws, regulations, and prohibitions, and none else has the ability or the right to do so.

By stating that the commandment is entirely Allah's, we mean that all authority and judgment are in His hand alone. Thus, command stands for authority and judgment, which are expressed in Arabic as '*im¡rah* (leadership)' and the leader and judge is expressed as '*am¢r*'. The aforesaid verse distinctively restricts authority and judgment to the Almighty alone; as a result, He, and none else, has the right to designate to authority and judgment over the human society whomever He wants, and He

1. Qur'an *A`raf 7/54.*

alone appoints judges and leaders and has the right to do so.

2- Verses of Judgment

This set of verses indicates that judgment is Allah's alone and none else has the right to judge and rule over the people.

Stating this meaning obviously, the Almighty says.

﴿أَلَا لَهُ ٱلْحُكْمُ﴾

"Surely discretion belongs to Him!"[1]

﴿إِنِ ٱلْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ﴾

"Discretion lies only with God."[2]

and

﴿وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِى حُكْمِهِۦٓ أَحَدًا﴾

"...nor does He let anyone else share in His discretion."[3]

According to these texts, it is unfeasible that the Almighty has a partner in His judgment. In other words, the judgment is not distributed between the Almighty and anyone else, such as the people; rather, He is the One and Only Judge Who, alone, has the right to designate to the office of judgment whomever He wishes and to appoint a judge, which is one of His particular affairs that none else can have any share in.

1. Qur'an *an`¡m 6/62.*
2. Qur'an *An`am 6/57.*
3. Qur'an *Kahf 18/26.*

3- Verses of Kingdom

These verses restrict kingdom to Allah the Almighty alone.

He thus says,

﴿قُلِ ٱللَّهُمَّ مَٰلِكَ ٱلۡمُلۡكِ تُؤۡتِي ٱلۡمُلۡكَ مَن تَشَآءُ وَتَنزِعُ ٱلۡمُلۡكَ مِمَّن تَشَآءُ﴾

"SAY: "O God, Holder of control! You give control to anyone You wish and snatch control from anyone You wish."[1]

This holy verse plainly avers that kingdom is Allah's alone, and He gives it to whomever He wishes and takes it from whomever He wishes.

In the second piece of the holy verse, the Almighty says,

﴿وَتُعِزُّ مَن تَشَآءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَن تَشَآءُۖ بِيَدِكَ ٱلۡخَيۡرُۖ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ قَدِيرٞ﴾

"You exalt anyone You wish and humble anyone You wish. Good lies within Your hand; You are Capable of everything!"[2]

Later, we will discuss the notions of *`izz* (dignity) and *dhull* (humiliation) that are mentioned in this holy verse, because these notions have a close connection with the notions of Imamate and *wil¡yah* (divinely ordained leadership).

It seems necessary to touch on the fact that the Qur'¡nic notions are put in an epistemic system, which can be described as all-inclusive, wide-ranging in meaning, integral in purports, and harmonious in notions, in the sense that its notions are complete and relate to each

1. Qur'an *Aal imran 3/26.*
2. Qur'an *Aal imran 3/26.*

other, and each notion has its own position within the system of Qur'¡nic meaning. In view of this fact, the two notions of dignity and humiliation have a relationship with Imamate and have their special positions in the notional system of the Holy Qur'¡n. Similarly, the notion of *khayr* (good) that is mentioned in the same holy verse has its own position in the notional system of the Holy Qur'¡n and has its own relationship with Imamate. This is so because Imamate is the way to human perfection, while perfection entirely stands for the good, which is exclusively in the hand of the Almighty, and man can obtain this goodness through no other way than the system of Imamate. However, the main concern in this discussion is to prove that the holy verse openly indicates that authority is Allah's alone, and He, and He alone, can give it to whomever He wishes and take it from whomever He wishes.

On another occasion, the Holy Qur'¡n reads,

﴿وَٱللَّهُ يُؤْتِى مُلْكَهُۥ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

"God gives his control to anyone He wishes; God is Boundless, Aware." [1]

In this holy verse, kingdom is annexed to the Almighty, which authentically means that kingdom belongs to Him exclusively.

In addition to this holy verse, many other verses bear innumerable evident proofs of the concept of imposing Imamate in the Holy Qur'¡n. The following holy verse,

1. Qur'an *Baqara 2/247.*

which shows one of the manners of the Children of Israel, reads,

﴿وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا ۚ قَالُوٓا۟ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لَهُ ٱلْمُلْكُ﴾

"Their prophet told them: "God has sent Saul as a king for you." They said: "How could he hold control over us."[1]

The Arabic word *mulk*, which means kingdom, is an evident indicative of authority, and it cannot be interpreted into any other meaning than this. Hence, the word in this holy verse refers to the authority and political leader, and there is no way to doubt that the general meaning of the verse is that authority is in the hand of the Almighty alone, and He puts it wherever He, and He alone, wishes.

According to the course of the verse, too, we can conclude that the Children of Israel tried to interfere in the issue of kingdom and leadership; so, they objected to the divine selection by saying,

﴿أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لَهُ ٱلْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِٱلْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِّنَ ٱلْمَالِ﴾

"How could he hold control over us, since we are fitter to exercise control than he is? He has not been given ample wealth."[2]

But the reply of the Lord came, on the tongue of their prophet, as follows:

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1. Qur'an *Baqara 2/247.*
2. Qur'an *Baqara 2/247.*

﴿قَالَ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُۥ بَسْطَةً فِى ٱلْعِلْمِ وَٱلْجِسْمِ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ يُؤْتِى مُلْكَهُۥ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

He said: "God has singled him out for you and added plenty to his knowledge and physique. God gives his control to anyone He wishes; God is Boundless, Aware."[1]

Hence, except for Allah the Almighty, none has the right to interfere in the issue of authority and political leadership, because authority and kingdom is Allah's alone, and He alone chooses for them whomever He wishes:

﴿وَٱللَّهُ يُؤْتِى مُلْكَهُۥ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

"God gives his control to anyone He wishes; God is Boundless, Aware."[2]

The point that must be understood here is that the concept of the divine designation to Imamate does not mean that the masses must have no role in the authority over them; rather, they have a definite role. The Holy Qur'¡n, through texts, confirms that the people must play a political role in the selection of the authority, and this role stands for their power and ability to place the divinely selected persons in their leading positions.

Generally, political authority acquires its power and effect from the selection of the people for leadership, their obedience to these leaders, and their support of them. Unless the people choose and approve of their leader, the

1. Qur'an *Baqara 2/247.*
2. Qur'an *Baqara 2/247*

leader will not be able to lead them and will lose power to establish justice among them, stop injustice, and impede the unjust among them. Thus, there must be a popular determination on which the divinely chosen leader relies and leans. In view of that, the concept of imposing Imamate in the Holy Qur'¡n, which we adopt, comes to mean that we must choose for leadership the ones chosen by Allah the Almighty and presented in the Holy Qur'¡n. In other words, this concept believes that judgment and leadership are Allah's alone; therefore, leadership has no legitimacy at all unless it is appointed by the Almighty. However, the divine designation to leadership does not endow the political leadership with anything more than legitimacy and validity, while the people have their own role in this process, which is granting power and capability to the divinely appointed leader to do his leading functions appropriately.

In brief, by stating that the right to Imamate and kingdom is Allah's alone and none else, we mean that the legitimacy of kingdom and the legitimacy of the political leadership must stem from one source only; namely, Allah the Almighty. Consequently, a leader must have been designated by the Almighty to this office so that he would have the right and legality to hold the reins of authority over the people. In other words, a leader does not acquire leadership and validity to rule unless there is a divine nomination. However, the following question seems to need an answer: Under what circumstances can this rightful leader establish the judgment of the Almighty on the earth and lead the people?

To answer, the leader can do these missions only after the people have the determination to enable him to do so.

Therefore, the role of the people in this process can be summed up in two points: (1) strengthening the authority of the leader and (2) supporting him. As for Imamate, it acquires its legitimacy from none except the Almighty.

Back to the verse of kingdom, the Almighty says,

﴿لَهُۥ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ﴾

"God [Alone] holds control over Heaven and Earth."[1]

﴿وَقُلِ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِى لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ شَرِيكٌ فِى ٱلْمُلْكِ﴾

"SAY: "Praise be to God Who has adopted no son and has no partner in control."[2]

Just as the Almighty does not accept any partner and does not give anyone any part in His judgment, so also does he never accept any partner in kingdom.

He, the Almighty, says,

﴿تَبَٰرَكَ ٱلَّذِى بِيَدِهِ ٱلْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾

"Blessed is He in Whose hands there rests control; He is Capable of [doing] everything."[3]

﴿فَتَعَٰلَى ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمَلِكُ ٱلْحَقُّ﴾

"Exalted is God, the True Controller."[4]

The true king is Allah and none else; therefore, any king that is not appointed by Him cannot be a true and a valid king. He, the Almighty, says in this regard,

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1. Qur'an *Baqara 2/107.*
2. Qur'an *Isr¡ 17/111.*
3. Qur'an *Mulk 67/1.*
4. Qur'an *Taha 20/114.*

﴿قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ ٱلنَّاسِ مَلِكِ ٱلنَّاسِ﴾

"SAY: "I take refuge with the Lord of Mankind".[1]

As maintained by this holy verse, Allah the Almighty is the king Who has the last word in the issue of authority and rulership and He alone grants so to whomever He wishes.

4- Verses of Guardianship

This set of Qur'¡nic verses indicates that guardianship is Allah's alone. One of these verses reads,

﴿مَا لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِۦ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِى حُكْمِهِۦٓ أَحَدًا﴾

"They have no patron besides Him, nor does He let anyone else share in His discretion."[2]

It is noteworthy that the Holy Qur'¡n has used a large variety of expressions and terms to indicate that authority and leadership is Allah's alone – a fact that shows: first, the utmost interest of the Divine Care in the issue of judgment and having power over the people; second, authority and rule are Allah's alone, and; third, the divine selection for such positions is a necessarily unavoidable matter.

The Almighty also says,

﴿أَمِ ٱتَّخَذُوا۟ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ ۖ فَٱللَّهُ هُوَ ٱلْوَلِىُّ﴾

"Why, have they adopted other patrons instead of Him?"[3] ***"God is the [Only] Patron."***[1]

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1. Qur'an *N¡s 114/1-2.*
2. Qur'an *Kahf 18/26.*
3. Qur'an *Maaida 5/*55.

Along these lines, guardianship over all peoples is Allah's alone, and He appoints for them the one who runs their affairs. In view of that, He the Almighty says,

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمْ رَٰكِعُونَ﴾

"Your Patron is God [Alone], as well as His Messenger and those who believe, who keep up prayer, pay the welfare tax and bow their heads [in worship]."[2]

﴿وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ ٱللَّهِ هُمُ ٱلْغَٰلِبُونَ﴾

"Anyone who enlists God as a patron, and His messenger and those who believe, [will find] God's side will be victorious!"[3]

He also says,

﴿ثُمَّ رُدُّوٓاْ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ مَوْلَىٰهُمُ ٱلْحَقِّ ۚ أَلَا لَهُ ٱلْحُكْمُ وَهُوَ أَسْرَعُ ٱلْحَٰسِبِينَ﴾

"Then they will be sent back to God, their true Patron. Surely discretion belongs to Him! He is the Swiftest Reckoner."[4]

The true guardian and lord is Allah, Who never gives any share to anyone in this guardianship. Too many are the holy Qur'¡nic verse that support this meaning.

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1. Quran *Sh£r¡ 42/9*.
2. Qur'an Cattle 6:62
3. Qur'an *Maaidah 5/55-6.*
4. Qur'an *An`am 6/62.*

5- Verses of Obedience

The verses that define obedience can be classified into two categories:

The first category involves the verses that command obeying Allah and the Messenger absolutely without any exception, such as the following:

﴿أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ﴾

"Obey God and obey the Messenger."[1]

﴿مَّن يُطِعِ ٱلرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ ٱللَّهَ﴾

"Anyone who obeys the Messenger has obeyed God [Himself]."[2]

These two verses and their like indicate that obedience to the Almighty and to the Messenger is categorically obligatory. In this connection, there are other verses of the same expression pointing to the duty of obeying the "*men in authority*" with an absolute obedience. The Almighty thus says,

﴿أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ﴾

"Obey God and obey the Messenger"[3]

This holy verse commands obligatory, general, and unrestricted obedience to the Messenger and the "*men in authority*", which means that they must be obeyed in whatever they order and whatever they prohibit. Such is what we mean by unrestricted obedience.

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1. Qur'an *Nisa 4/59.*
2. Qur'an *Nisa 4/80.*
3. Qur'an *Nisa 4/59.*

Unless this *wal¢*, or man in authority, is sinless, inerrant, and perfectly compliant with the orders of the Almighty, obedience to him will not be perfect. As a result, in order for the *wal¢* to be perfectly obeyed, he must be nominated by the Almighty Who alone realizes the sinless person, because inerrancy and infallibility can be realized by Allah alone and none else. Referring to this fact, the Almighty says,

﴿فَلَا تُزَكُّوٓاْ أَنفُسَكُمۡۖ هُوَ أَعۡلَمُ بِمَنِ ٱتَّقَىٰٓ﴾

"Do not try to justify yourselves; He is quite Aware as to who has done his duty."[1]

﴿أَلَمۡ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ يُزَكُّونَ أَنفُسَهُمۚ بَلِ ٱللَّهُ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَآءُ﴾

"Have you not seen those who purify themselves? Indeed God will purify anyone He wishes to."[2]

Infallibility is under Allah's dominance, and obedience must be to Him; so, since He had ordered us to obey the *wal¢* absolutely without exception, this must be understood to mean that the *wal¢* must be appointed and pointed to by the Almighty, because He alone knows the secrets and the hidden matters. He, therefore, alone discriminates the fallible from the infallible.

The second category of the verses of guardianship involves the verses that deem obligatory to refer to the "*men in authority*" in all affairs. Thus, whenever people dispute about an affair, they are obligatorily required to refer their disputes to the "*men in authority*" in the same

1. Qur'an *najm 54/32.*
2. Qur'an *Nisa 4/49.*

way as they are ordered to refer them to the Messenger. In this respect, the Almighty says,

﴿وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْنِ أَوِ ٱلْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا۟ بِهِۦ ۖ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱلرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰٓ أُو۟لِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ﴾

"Whenever some order concerning [public] safety or fear comes to them, they broadcast. If they would only refer it to the Messenger and those among them who hold command."[1]

On another occasion, He says,

﴿فَإِن تَنَٰزَعْتُمْ فِى شَىْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱلرَّسُولِ﴾

"If you should quarrel over anything, refer it to God and the Messenger."[2]

These holy verses enjoin that every affair that is subjected to dispute must be referred to Allah the Almighty and to the Messenger. Of course, every intentional action is applicable to dispute.

The two holy verses also indicate that at the same time, as it is obligatory to refer every disputable matter to the Almighty and to the Messenger, so also is it obligatory to refer it to the "men in authority". As a result, one who meets the qualifications of being "man in authority" must not be objected to in whatever he commands, since his words are but true, and he is the decisive referential authority in disputes. This means that this "man in authority" must be seen as the decisive factor that discriminates the right from the wrong, and truth from

1. Qur'an *Nisa 4/83.*
2. Qur'an *Nisa 4/59.*

falsehood. He, therefore, must be infallible and must have been appointed by Allah the Almighty.

6- Verses of Choice

The Almighty says,

﴿وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ ۗ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ ٱلْخِيَرَةُ ۚ سُبْحَانَ ٱللَّهِ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ﴾

"Your Lord creates and chooses anything He wishes; while they have no choice. Praise be to God; Exalted is He over anything they may associate with Him!"

﴿وَرَبُّكَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ﴾

"Your Lord knows anything their breasts conceal and anything they may disclose."

﴿وَهُوَ ٱللَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ لَهُ ٱلْحَمْدُ فِى ٱلْأُولَىٰ وَٱلْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَلَهُ ٱلْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾

"He is God [Alone]; there is no deity except Him! Praise belongs to Him from the very first as well as in the Hereafter. Discretion is His, and to Him will you (all) return."[1]

This holy verse plainly states that Allah is the Creator and the One Who chooses.

The verse also holds a comparison between creation and choice, which indicates that just as Allah is the God in creation and He never gives anyone any share in His creation, so also is He the God in choosing, which means

1. Qur'an *Qasas 28/68-70*,

that He is the Basis for choosing; so, none participates in His choice. This means that Allah alone chooses for men and decides what is good for them and what is evil. So, the goodness of any intentional act of humankind lies with Allah, and human beings must follow the orders and prohibitions of the Almighty in every optional affair of their lives. Finally, the holy verse decides that to put one's choice in the hand of other than Allah is pure polytheism; i.e. setting partners with Allah.

By and large, the aforesaid holy Qur'¡nic verses, as a whole, indicate that authority and choice with regard to the affairs of man rest in the hand of Allah alone and none else. Hence, He, the Almighty says,

﴿ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ ٱلْخِيَرَةُ﴾

"...while they have no choice."[1]

As people have no right to choose with regard to what they do, while choice is Allah's alone, they also have no right to choose their leaders and Imams. Leadership is within the range of matters in which the people need the choice of the Almighty.

However, a question may be posed in this regard: How should we understand the verse of consultation (*sh£r¡*) in view of the aforesaid fact. The Almighty says,

﴿وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ ﴾

"and through mutual consultation among themselves."[2]

1. Qur'an *Qasas 28/68.*
2. Qur'an *Sh£r¡ 42/38.*

The notion of this holy verse may seem to some people to be contradictory to the verse of "*they do not have the right to choose*. [1]

However, a thorough contemplation will lead us to understand that there is no contradiction between the two verses, because the "verse of choice" evidently demonstrates that the source of decision in social affairs is Allah, and none else has the right to decide for them except Him. Of course, this includes the affair of leadership and Imamate; therefore, leadership of the society must be decided by the Almighty alone and He has the right to choose anyone He wishes for this position. Thus, He chose the Holy Prophet to be His Messenger and the leader of the Muslim community just the same as He did with Prophet Abraham and those among his righteous descendants. On the other hand, the "verse of consultation" indicates that the legitimate leader is required to consult with the others when making any decision. Then, after consultation, he alone has the right to issue the final decision even if this decision is against the advice and opinion of the consultants when he believes that their opinions have not alighted on the truth and the best interests. This is the very linguistic meaning of *sh£r¡* (consultation). In other words, the word *sh£r¡* has no other meaning than exchanging views with others as a preliminary step for decision making by the one who legitimately has the right to rule and make decisions. Besides, the aforesaid verse of consultation does not hold any indication of giving the right to making any decision to the consultants; rather, the word *sh£r¡*, according to its

1. Quran *Qasas 28/68-70.*

Qur'¡nic notion, is not consistent with this meaning at all. Therefore, on another occasion when the Almighty instructs His Prophet to consult with others, He follows it by ordering him to rely upon the Almighty after determination. Thus, the Holy Qur'¡n says,

﴿ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِى ٱلْأَمْرِ ۖ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ﴾

"...and consult with them on the matter. Yet once you have reached a decision, then rely on God."[1]

This holy verse orders the Holy Messenger to confer with others with regard to the decisions he wants to make, but the verse then leaves the right to deciding and determination to him. Thus, the Holy Prophet alone is the decision maker and the others' duty towards him is to obey and follow. Nevertheless, the Holy Prophet is required to take counsel with them before making a final decision.

In the light of this, consultation, or *sh£r¡*, cannot be the source of making decisions; rather, it is no more than exchanging opinions and views with the others as a preliminary step for making a final decision.

Moreover, the verse of consultation does not touch on the one who should make the decision. The Qur'¡nic expression, "*and their rule is to take counsel among themselves*" means that they are required to take counsel in all affairs they experience before they make the final decision. At the same time, the verse does not name the one who is qualified enough to be the decision maker.

1. Qur'an "*Aal-imran 3/159.*

On the other hand, the verse of choice maintains that the choice is Allah's and the final decision is in His hand alone; therefore, the decision and the nomination must be from Him alone. The second step after this nomination is that the one who is designated by the Almighty to this position is required to take counsel with the believers with regard to whatever decision he wants to make. Namely, this one is described by the Holy Qur'¡n as "*having a greater claim on the believers than they have on themselves*" and as "*men in authority* (*uli'l-amr*)".

The verse of consultation thus means that the believers should be illuminated by the views of one another when they are determined to make a decision. This of course includes all fields of human life and personal affairs in which the people are required to benefit by the opinions of one another. Yet, the final decision is still in the hand of the one who is concerned by the decision directly, but not in the hand of the consultation. In other words, when one takes counsel with others concerning a certain matter, this does not mean that the final decision about this matter is in the hand of the consultants; rather, the final decision is still in the hand of the seeker of advice.

Addressing His Prophet, Allah the Almighty says,

﴿وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِى ٱلْأَمْرِ ۖ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ﴾

"...and consult with them on the matter. Yet once you have reached a decision, then rely on God."[1]

This verse evidently demonstrates that the final decision is not in the hand of those whose advice has been sought;

1. Qur'an "*Aal-imran 3/159.*

rather, they are no more than counsellors whose one and only mission is to provide good advice. Counsel is taken with the people, but the final decision is made by Allah and by the one appointed by Him. The previous discussion proves that there is no contradiction between the verse of consultation and the one of choice.

7- Verse of Adjudication

The Almighty says,

﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا۟ فِى أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا۟ تَسْلِيمًا﴾

"Yet by your Lord, they will never believe until they name you to judge concerning what they are quarrelling among themselves; then they will find no inconvenience for themselves concerning whatever you have decided, and will accept it wholeheartedly."[1] This holy verse suggests that it is obligatory to make the Holy Messenger the judge in whatever dispute and clash that may arise among the believers. Hence, the holy verse holds such a general notion that is not restricted to the issues of judgments and judicature; rather, it includes every issue that may be disputable. It also indicates that it is obligatory upon all Muslims without exception to refer to and accept the Holy Prophet as the final judge in every affair and at all times. The verse is thus not restricted to the Muslims who saw and lived in the age of the Holy Prophet; rather, reference to the Almighty and to the Holy Prophet is one of the conditions of true faith in every age

1. Qur'an *Nisa 4/65.*

and it is incumbent upon all Muslims of all ages. In plain words, all Muslims at all ages cannot be true believers unless they refer to the Messenger in every disputable matter.

However, the following question may be posed in this regard: How can we refer to the Messenger in judgment after his passing away?

Even if we lived in the time of the Holy Prophet but we lived in a distant place, like the Yemen; how would it be possible for us to refer to the Messenger for judgment, since it would be difficult for us to contact him directly?

Of course, we would refer in judgment to the one whom the Messenger had appointed as ruler over us.

As for places, the people of Yemen, in fact, used to ask the Holy Prophet for judgment in their disputable issues, and the Holy Prophet used to send them Imam `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib or Ma`¡dh ibn Jabal to settle their disputes. By referring to Imam `Al¢ or to Ma`¡dh, the people of Yemen were as if they provided their disputes before the Holy Prophet and asked for his judgment about them; hence, they used to put into practice the instruction mentioned in the aforesaid holy verse.

As for time, in the light of the aforesaid holy verse, it is unavoidable to refer to the one whom the Holy Prophet had nominated and appointed as *imam* and as referential authority in judgments and in all affairs. Therefore, as we are far away from the Holy Prophet in time, we have to refer to him all of our affairs so that he can judge about them. In this case, our reference to the Holy Prophet must take the form of reference to the ones whom he had

appointed as our leaders and *imams*. Thus, by referring to these persons, we would be considered to have referred to the Holy Prophet and accepted him as judge not only in our disputable matters, but also in all of our mundane and religious affairs.

8- Verses of Granting Kingdom

Too many are the Qur'¡nic verses that indicated the Almighty's granting kingdom to whomever He wishes. The following are some examples:

﴿وَٱللَّهُ يُؤۡتِي مُلۡكَهُۥ مَن يَشَآءُ﴾

"God gives his control to anyone He wishes."[1]

﴿قُلِ ٱللَّهُمَّ مَٰلِكَ ٱلۡمُلۡكِ تُؤۡتِي ٱلۡمُلۡكَ مَن تَشَآءُ وَتَنزِعُ ٱلۡمُلۡكَ مِمَّن تَشَآءُ﴾

"SAY: "O God, Holder of control! You give control to anyone You wish and snatch control from anyone You wish."[2]

﴿فَقَدۡ ءَاتَيۡنَآ ءَالَ إِبۡرَٰهِيمَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ وَءَاتَيۡنَٰهُم مُّلۡكًا عَظِيمٗا﴾

"We already gave Abraham's family the Book and wisdom, and We gave them splendid control."[3]

Whenever used, the Arabic word ¢t¡' (granting) denotes that the grantor possesses the thing that he wants to grant. All the verses that held this word indicate that the kingdom is possessed by none save the Almighty, and He alone grants it to whomever He wishes, and none else can

1. Qur'an *Baqara 2/247.*
2. Qur'an *Aal-imran 3/26.*
3. Qur'an *Nisa 4/54.*

have any share of this kingdom unless the Almighty grants him so.

Supporting and indicating this meaning, the word ¢t¡' has been used in the following holy verse in a restrictive mode and has been preceded by a statement evidently indicating that kingdom is Allah's alone:

﴿قُلِ ٱللَّهُمَّ مَٰلِكَ ٱلْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِى ٱلْمُلْكَ مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَنزِعُ ٱلْمُلْكَ مِمَّن تَشَاءُ﴾

"SAY: "O God, Holder of control! You give control to anyone You wish and snatch control from anyone You wish."[1]

To avoid lengthiness, we have so far cited a few number of numerous Qur'¡nic verses that prove that an *Imam* must be appointed by divine texts.

The Holy Qur'¡n reads:

﴿وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱلرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰٓ أُوْلِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ﴾

"If they would only refer it to the Messenger and those among them who hold command."[2]

﴿أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ﴾

"Obey God and obey the Messenger and those from among you who hold command."[3]

These holy verses and many others bear out that Imamate, in the sense of succession to the Holy Prophet in mundane and religious affairs of the Muslim community, had been appointed during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, and all

1. Qur'an *Aal-imran 3/26.*
2. Qur'an *Nisa 4/83.*
3. Qur'an *Nisa 4/59,*

believers at that time had been ordered and put under the duty of obeying the Imam that was nominated by the Holy Prophet. As a result, even during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, it was practically obligatory upon all believers to refer to this Imam when the Holy Prophet would be away, since their reference to the Imam, who was appointed and designated to this office by the Almighty and the Holy Prophet, was considered to be reference to Allah and His Messenger. This is in fact the very meaning of Sh¢`ism.

In other words, Sh¢`ism stands for reference to Allah, to His Messenger, and to the Imams whom were appointed by Allah and His Messenger as referential authorities of the Muslim community after the passing away of the Holy Prophet, and entails thorough compliance with the order of the Almighty and His Prophet. Hence, Sh¢`ism in its reality denotes perfect obedience to the divinely ordained leadership that is represented by the Holy Prophet and his infallible successors, which is also the very essential meaning of Islam. As a result, Sh¢`ism is nothing but pure Islam and thorough obedience to the Holy Prophet.

More to the point, Sh¢`ism was not innovated after the passing away of the Holy Prophet; rather, it is a bright reflection of perfect Islam and faith, which was adopted by the virtuous companions of the Holy Prophet during his lifetime and after his passing away.

Indications of the fact that Sh¢`ism was a reality that existed during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet and was represented by his virtuous companions can be plainly found in many Qur'¡nic verses, such as the following:

﴿وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْنِ أَوِ ٱلْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُواْ بِهِۦ ۖ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱلرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰٓ أُوْلِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ ٱلَّذِينَ يَسْتَنۢبِطُونَهُۥ مِنْهُمْ﴾

"Whenever some order concerning [public] safety or fear comes to them, they broadcast it. If they would only refer it to the Messenger and those among them who hold command, those of them who investigate matters would have known about it." [1]

This holy verse refers to an event that actually took place during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. Accordingly, there was at least one "*believer*" during the Holy Prophet's lifetime that the Almighty ordered of referring to them after the passing away of the Holy Prophet, and there were some believers who actually used to refer to that "*believer*" after the passing away of the Holy Prophet, while that *believer* whom Allah Almighty introduced as a "*man in authority*" was the referential authority of Muslims even during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet.

In that case, the "*men in authority*" or *ulu'l-amr* were certain persons who existed in the time of the Holy Prophet and who were known for the others, and Allah the Almighty ordered His believing servants to refer to them and introduced them in the Holy Qur'¡n as having knowledge of all affairs. This meaning has been confirmed by other holy Qur'¡nic verses, such as the following:

﴿أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تُتْرَكُواْ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ جَٰهَدُواْ مِنكُمْ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُواْ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا رَسُولِهِۦ وَلَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلِيجَةً ۚ وَٱللَّهُ خَبِيرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ .

1. Qur'an *Nisa 4/83.*

"Or do you reckon you will be abandoned once God knows which of you have struggled, and did not adopt anyone as an ally besides God, His messenger and believers? God is Informed about anything you do."[1]

This holy verse addresses the believers in general and excludes the hypocrites, the unbelievers, and the polytheists. So, the holy verse says to the addressees that they will not be left without test; rather, they will be tested and tried so that those who are in line with the Almighty, the Messenger, and the Believers will be discriminated from the others. The Believers whom Allah has ordered the others to follow are exclusively those whom He has chosen for Imamate and leadership of the Muslim community. In other words, the tested believers are not the special Believers whom He has made the purposes of test. Hence, the ordinary believers are the tested ones, while the Believers who represent the purpose of testing are certain persons. The word *wal¢jah* mentioned in the aforesaid holy verse stands for the entrance and the way that must be taken by the believers. Thus, the holy verse can be explained as follows: We test, try, and examine you so that we will realize which one of you will keep on the line of Allah, the Messenger, and the Believers.

These Believers are the same as those mentioned in this holy verse:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤۡتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمۡ رَٰكِعُونَ﴾

1. Qur'an *Tawba 9/16.*

"Your Patron is God [Alone], as well as His Messenger and those who believe-who keep up prayer, pay the welfare tax and bow their heads [in worship]."

﴿وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ ٱللَّهِ هُمُ ٱلْغَٰلِبُونَ﴾

"Anyone who enlists God as a patron, and His Messenger and those who believe, [will find] God's side will be victorious!"[1]

The Holy Qur'¡n seems to insist on hiding the names of these special Believers; rather, it metonymically and suggestively cites texts referring to the Imams after the Holy Messenger. The reason behind this is now so well-known and recognized, since it is indicated by the events by which the Muslim community passed immediately after the passing away of the Holy Prophet, especially during the reigns of the Umayyad and `Abb¡sid dynasties. To explain, if the Holy Qur'¡n had mentioned Imam `Al¢ and the Holy Imams by name, it would certainly have been exposed to disruption and extermination during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. Besides, the members of the *`itrah* (i.e. the Holy Prophet's Household) were exposed to extermination immediately after his passing away. Was Imam al-°usayn not a member of the *`itrah* whom the Holy Qur'¡n commanded the Muslims to love and follow, saying,

﴿قُل لَّآ أَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا ٱلْمَوَدَّةَ فِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ﴾

"SAY: "I do not ask you any payment for it except affection towards your relatives."[1]

1. Qur'an *Maaidah 5/55-6.*

Does history of Islam not hold that the Holy Prophet's family members were massacred so violently, especially in the first two centuries of the advent of Islam? Are these people not the very 'relatives' whom were slain and cut apart?

If the Holy Qur'¡n had mentioned Imam `Al¢ by name, the Qur'¡n would certainly have been rent asunder and no trace of it would have remained.

The Almighty says in the Holy Qur'¡n,

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ﴾

"We Ourselves have sent down the Reminder just as We are safeguarding it."[2]

Thus, the divine wisdom of maintaining the Holy Qur'¡n required that the Qur'¡n should point to the truth and to the Imam in such a way that would save it from being distorted and discredited. So, whoever seeks the truth through the Holy Qur'¡n, will find it clear and unambiguous to follow within its verses and within the authentically reported words of the Holy Prophet. The Almighty has never left any pretext for the opportunists, the oppositionists, and the tendentious to harm the honour of the Holy Qur'¡n; rather, He, the Almighty, maintained the safety of the Qur'¡n and informed on the truth. This is why we find that the Holy Qur'¡n uses styles of metonymy in nominating the Imam who would succeed the Holy Messenger in the leadership of the Muslim community.

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1. Qur'an *Sh£r¡ 42/23*.
2. Qur'an *Hijr 15/9*.

Among the other holy Qur'¡nic verses that reveal appointing the Imam who would lead the Muslims after the Holy Prophet during the lifetime of the Prophet is the following:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمْ رَٰكِعُونَ﴾

"Your Patron is God [Alone], as well as His Messenger and those who believe-who keep up prayer, pay the welfare tax and bow their heads [in worship]."[1]

All Muslim scholars have unanimously stated that this holy verse was revealed to express one of the manners of Imam `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib; namely, when the Imam gave his ring as alms while he was in the state of the ritual genuflection of a prayer.[2]

The holy verse shows that Imam `Al¢ was an obligatorily obeyed leader (Imam) during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. To explain, the Qur'¡nic statement "*Your Guardian is only…*" expresses that this guardianship, or *wil¡yah*, is unquestionably affirmed for these three (i.e. Allah the Almighty, the Holy Prophet, and Imam `Al¢) during the time of the revelation of the verse. As a result, the holy verse can serve as indisputable proof of the fact

1. Qur'an *Maaidah 55.*

2. For more information, refer to the books of *tafs¢r* (exegesis of the Holy Qur'¡n) compiled by both Sunni and Sh¢`ite scholars. In these books, the reader can touch on a large number of uninterruptedly reported traditions confirming that the holy verse was revealed about Imam `Al¢. For instance, see the following reference books of *tafs¢r*: *Tafs¢r al-±abar¢* 6/186; al-W¡¦id¢, *Asb¡b al-Nuz£l*, pp. 123-34; al-°¡kim al-°asak¡n¢, *Shaw¡hid al-Tanz¢l* 1:161-4; *Tafs¢r al-Suy£§¢* 2:293; al-Suy£§¢, *Lub¡b al-Nuq£l f¢ Asb¡b al-Nuz£l*, pp. 90.

that `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib was appointed as the Imam of Muslims during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. Likewise, this holy verse explains the other previously mentioned Qur'¡nic verses, all of which indicate the necessity of the existence of a referential authority for Muslims after the passing away of the Holy Prophet, and that the Almighty has ordered the Muslims to refer to that referential authority, deemed obligatory upon all of them to follow him, and decided this duty (of following him) to be the criterion of testing the faith of those who claimed having believed.

Among the other verses that imply the duty of referring to Imam `Al¢ as a referential authority during the Holy Prophet's lifetime is the following:

﴿أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ﴾

"You who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger and those from among you who hold command."[1]

This holy verse involves that it is obligatory upon all Muslims to obey the "men in authority in the same way as they obey Allah the Almighty and His Messenger. In addition, the Arabic expression *minkum* (from among you all) openly states that the term: "men in authority" is represented by an alive, actually existing person, obedience to whom is a religious duty.

Furthermore, this holy verse goes against the claim that leadership of the Muslims should be made by means of election and voting, because the holy verse overtly indicates that it is obligatory to obey the "men in

1. Qur'an *Nisa 4/59.*

authority" during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, which imposed that such a "man in authority" must have existed among the Muslims and must have been appointed beforehand. Thus, no space was left for the voting and choice of the people. Moreover, the Qur'¡nic emphasis on reference to the "men in authority" at disputes itself indicates that Allah the Almighty never neglected any matter on which Muslims might dispute unless He would appoint a decisive referential authority for them to whom they should refer in having the final word in such disputes. It is therefore illogical to believe that the Almighty had neglected the affair of the succession to the Holy Prophet (i.e. Imamate), which is the most important disputable matter. In reality, Muslims disputed vehemently about this matter. It is also unimaginable that the door to the dispute about the next leadership should be left wide open.

Additionally, many holy Qur'¡nic verses hold that the Imam who is appointed by the Almighty must be protected from sinning. For example, the Holy Qur'¡n reads,

﴿ وَإِذِ ٱبْتَلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ رَبُّهُۥ بِكَلِمَٰتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّى جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَاماً ۖ قَالَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِى ۖ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴾

"When his Lord tested Abraham by means of [certain] words, and he fulfilled them, He said: "I am going to make you into a leader for mankind." He said: "What about my offspring?"; He said: "My pledge does not apply to evildoers."[1]

1. Qur'an *Baqara 2/124.*

In this holy verse, the word *¨ulm* (injustice) stands for disobedience and mutiny against the Almighty. Supporting this meaning, the Holy Qur'¡n reads on another occasion,

﴿وَمَن يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ﴾

"...and anyone who oversteps God's limits thereby harms himself."[1]

In plain words, the holy verse affirms that an unjust person who disobeys the Almighty does not deserve to be an *Imam* (leader). Again, an unjust person, even if the others do not have any idea about his injustice, can never be chosen for Imamate.

The holy verse thus states: My covenant is never given to one who is unjust in reality, even if the people do not know any wicked quality about him, such as if he had the ability to hide his wrongdoings, such as the hypocrites whose unjust deeds are unknown to the people and no one can recognize or point to them except the Almighty.

Among the other Qur'¡nic texts that hold clear-cut indications of the fact that an Imam must be sinless (i.e. divinely protected against sinning) is the following:

﴿أَفَمَن يَهْدِى إِلَى ٱلْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَن يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّن لَّا يَهِدِّى إِلَّا أَن يُهْدَىٰ ۖ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ﴾

"So is someone who guides to Truth worthier to be followed than someone who does not guide unless he

1. Qur'an *Talaq 65/1*.

himself is guided? What is the matter with you? How do you decide things?"[1]

This holy verse asserts that the people are not allowed to follow one who is in need of the guidance of others; rather, the one who should rightfully be followed is the one who guides and does not need the guidance of others. In the light of this Qur'¡nic fact, it goes without saying that every one other than the sinless Imam is in need of the guidance of others; therefore, none save the sinless Imam is worthy of being followed.

If we prove that the Imam must be sinless and inerrant, it will be automatically proven that he must be appointed by Allah the Almighty Who alone knows the secrets and hidden affairs of the people, can recognize the unjust from the just, and can distinguish the one who is always and under all conditions aright from the one who cannot be aright unless he receives guidance from the others.

1. Qur'an *Yunus 10/35.*

THIRD TOPIC

IMPOSING THE IMAMS IN QUR'ªNIC TEXTS

Under the first topic of this book, we discussed the notion of Imamate in the light of the Holy Qur'¡n and concluded that, according to the Qur'¡n, Imamate stands for leading humankind toward the sought after perfection in all of their intentional actions.

Under the second topic, we have discussed the point that the post of Imamate is a divinely decided position, and it is Allah alone Who chooses for this post whomever He wishes, while the people's selection, choice, and appointment have nothing to do with the matter. As points of evidence, we have cited many Qur'¡nic verses to confirm this concept; namely, the concept of divine nomination for leadership.

Under this topic, we will discuss, though briefly, the issue of the binding references to the Imams in the Holy Qur'¡n.

The Holy Qur'¡n has introduced the Imam, or the Holy Imam in particular, within a large variety of forms, which we have sorted in three categories of nomination. Hereinafter, these three categories will be cited:

First Form: This form involves a set of Qur'¡nic verses that pointed to the Imam throughout history. These verses highlight the fact that there are Imams who were appointed for this position by Allah the Almighty throughout the history of mankind, and that the Almighty ordered all people to obey them.

Second Form: This form involves the Qur'¡nic verses stating that the Imams are from the progeny of Prophet Abraham and the divine Imamate will continue in his offspring throughout history.

Third Form: This form holds the divine texts demonstrating that the Imams, after the Holy Prophet, will be from his family members; namely, `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib and specific men from his offspring, from whom Allah the Almighty has "removed uncleanness and purified them a thorough purification."

We will keep on discussing the topic of Imamate in the Holy Qur'¡n within these three forms.

Let us not miss hinting at the fact that the Prophetic texts on Imamate are uninterruptedly reported and numerous, and that they came in a great variety of expressions and implications. However, our discussion hereinafter will be focused on the Qur'¡nic texts regarding Imamate, even though we have to confess that we cannot present all of the Qur'¡nic texts in this regard; rather, we will just try to shed light on certain examples so that we will seek to clarify the general portrait of the Qur'¡nic texts on Imamate.

In point of fact, the Prophetic texts on Imamate represent another form of the Qur'¡nic texts, because the Holy Prophet's traditions (known as *Sunnah*) in their reality are only explanations of the Qur'¡nic texts. Besides, many Qur'¡nic texts have introduced obedience to the Holy Prophet as a religious duty that is incumbent upon all Muslims ("*Nisa 4/59"*). Justifying this religious duty, the Holy Qur'¡n further asserts that the Holy Prophet:

﴿وَمَا يَنطِقُ عَنِ ٱلْهَوَىٰ﴾

"He does not speak from some whim..."

﴿إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْىٌ يُوحَىٰ﴾

"...it is merely inspiration that is revealed [to him]."[1]

These Qur'¡nic texts, along with the commands and instructions they hold, bring in the uninterruptedly reported traditions of the Holy Prophet about Imamate as divine texts that are traced back to the texts of the Holy Qur'¡n in essence and real meaning.

Back to the main topic, the Qur'¡nic texts on Imamate, in their three forms, are as follows:

First Form: Hereinafter, we will cite a few Qur'¡nic texts indicating that the divine nomination for Imamate did not stop through history, and demonstrating that the Almighty always designated certain persons to the office of leadership in every age:

(1) Allah the Almighty says,

﴿وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِى كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱجْتَنِبُوا۟ ٱلطَّٰغُوتَ﴾

"We have despatched a messenger to every nation [who said]: "Serve God [Alone] and turn aside from the Arrogant ones."[2]

Throughout history and for all nations, Allah sent a messenger to convey to the people that they should serve Him and shun false gods. As is clearly indicated by the

1. Qur'an *Najm 53/3-4*.
2. Qur'an *Nahl 16/36*.

linguistic meaning, the word '*serve*' in this holy verse means perfect submission to the Almighty, including all of the intentional actions of mankind. We have previously defined Imamate as leading mankind in all of their intentional actions towards perfection, which is another form of perfect submission to the Almighty. Thus, Imamate in its reality means to lead people to serve the Almighty in all of their affairs. This meaning is in fact the opposite, contrary, and converse of the meaning of the word *§¡gh£t*, which is said to the absolute tyrants who call upon the people to mutiny against obedience to Allah the Almighty. Examples of such absolute tyrants are Satan, the chiefs of atheism, the misleaders, the heads of unjust policies, and the lords of power and influence who hinder people from following the path of Allah and call them to abandon His judgments.

Moreover, we can characterize the meanings of *§¡gh£t* (false gods) and *`ib¡dah* (servitude or worship) through investigation of some Qur'¡nic texts.

The Almighty says,

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُواْ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَن يَتَحَاكَمُوٓاْ إِلَى ٱلطَّٰغُوتِ وَقَدْ أُمِرُوٓاْ أَن يَكْفُرُواْ بِهِۦ﴾

"Have you not considered those who claim they believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you? They want to seek judgment from arrogant leaders and so they are ordered to disbelieve in it."[1]

This holy verse comes directly after the following one:

1. Qur'an *Nisa 4/60.*

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَمۡرِ مِنكُمۡۖ فَإِن تَنَٰزَعۡتُمۡ فِي شَيۡءٖ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱلرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمۡ تُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيۡرٞ وَأَحۡسَنُ تَأۡوِيلًا﴾

"You who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger and those from among you who hold command. If you should quarrel over anything, refer it to God and the Messenger if you believe in God and the Last Day; that will be better, and finer in the long run."[1]

According to this holy verse and many similar ones, *§¡gh£t* is every judge other than the Almighty, and everyone who calls for abandoning divine judgment and replacing it with a secular one.

Hence, the verse at issue can be explained as follows: We raised in every nation certain divine leaders to govern the affairs of people, judge among them according to the instructions of the Almighty, and call them to serve Him, submit to His judgments, and reject and resist the governments of false gods.

﴿وَلَقَدۡ بَعَثۡنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٖ رَّسُولًا أَنِ ٱعۡبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱجۡتَنِبُواْ ٱلطَّٰغُوتَ﴾

"We have despatched a messenger to every nation [who said]: "Serve God [Alone] and turn aside from the Arrogant ones."[2]

(2) The Almighty says,

﴿وَمَا أَرۡسَلۡنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِۚ وَلَوۡ أَنَّهُمۡ إِذ ظَّلَمُوٓاْ أَنفُسَهُمۡ جَآءُوكَ فَٱسۡتَغۡفَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱسۡتَغۡفَرَ لَهُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُواْ ٱللَّهَ تَوَّابٗا رَّحِيمٗا﴾

1. Qur'an *Nisa 4/59.*
2. Qur'an *Nahl 16/*36.

"We have not sent any messenger unless he was to be obeyed in accordance with God's permission. If they had come to you and sought forgiveness from God whenever they harmed themselves, and the Messenger had prayed for forgiveness for them, they would have found that God is Ever-Turning, Merciful."[1]

Just like the previous one, this holy verse holds that Allah the Almighty, throughout history, appointed His messengers as leaders and rulers over the people and ordered these people to obey and submit to them. In other words, there was no messenger that Allah the Almighty sent but that he should be obeyed by his people; that is, he should be an obeyed leader. The holy verse also contains a remarkable point; namely, the expression "*by the permission of Allah*" indicates that the people should obey the messengers because they are the leaders and rulers over them, not because they convey to them the messages of the Lord. This expression thus means that Allah has permitted that His messengers should be obeyed, which means that He has appointed these messengers for the position of conveying His messages to the people. Of course, this expression openly asserts that obedience to the messengers is in its reality obedience to their leadership and rulership, but not obedience to their being conveyors of the Lord's orders and prohibitions; lest, the verse would have come in this form: "*We did not send any messenger but that Allah should be obeyed*."

(3) The Almighty says,

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ ٱلنَّاسُ بِٱلْقِسْطِ﴾

1. Qur'an *Nisa 4/64.*

"We have sent Our messengers with explanations, and sent the Book and the Balance down along with them, so that mankind may conduct themselves with all fairness."[1]

This holy verse can be understood as follows: Throughout the history of mankind, we sent our messengers with clear proofs, books, and the balance. The mission of all of these messengers was to establish the rule of Allah on earth and to maintain justice among the people.

The word *kit¡b* in the verse stands for the divine law and constitution, because the word linguistically denotes every thing that is written and registered, while the verb 'write' is used to denote obligation and maintenance. Hence, the word *kit¡b* in this verse means the binding and unchangeable orders and prohibitions of Allah the Almighty.

As for the other word; i.e. *m¢z¡n*, it denotes whatever is used for weighing matters so as to distinguish the good from the bad. In this holy verse, the word *m¢z¡n* came to allude to the balance of actions, not the balance of weighable substances. By means of the balance of actions, good actions are discriminated from wrongdoings, the true from the false, and the genuine from the fake. Of course, the only things through which such discrimination can be made are the faculty of justice and the power of inerrancy, which are among the distinctive features that the Almighty conferred upon His prophets. Generally speaking, any ruler is in indispensable need for these two features; he needs full acquaintance with the law and requires the

1. Qur'an *Hadid 57/25.*

faculty of justice so that all of his behaviours, conducts, and practices will be consistent with justice and he will be proficient enough to establish the judgments of the Almighty and to put into effect His laws.

(4) The Almighty says,

﴿وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُۥٓ إِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۚ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا ۚ وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِن قَبْلُ ۖ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِۦ دَاوُۥدَ وَسُلَيْمَٰنَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَهَٰرُونَ ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِى ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾

"We bestowed Isaac and Jacob on him; each We guided. Noah We had guided before, and from his offspring [came] David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses and Aaron; thus We reward those who act kindly."

﴿وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَإِلْيَاسَ ۖ كُلٌّ مِّنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ﴾

"Zachariah, John, Jesus and Elijah were all honourable men."

﴿وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَٱلْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا ۚ وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ﴾

"...and Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah and Lot; each We preferred over [everybody else in] the Universe."

﴿وَمِنْ ءَابَآئِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّٰتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَٰنِهِمْ ۖ وَٱجْتَبَيْنَٰهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَٰهُمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

"We picked out some of their forefathers, their offspring and their brethren, and guided them to a Straight Road."

﴿ذَٰلِكَ هُدَى ٱللَّهِ يَهْدِى بِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِۦ ۚ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا۟ لَحَبِطَ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

"Such is God's guidance: He thereby guides any of His servants He may wish. If they had associated [others

with Him], whatever they were doing would have collapsed on them."

﴿أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَٰهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحُكْمَ وَٱلنُّبُوَّةَ ۚ فَإِن يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ فَقَدْ وَكَّلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَّيْسُوا۟ بِهَا بِكَٰفِرِينَ﴾

"Those are the ones to whom We have given the Book, along with discretion and prophethood; if such men should disbelieve in it, then We will entrust it to a folk who will not disbelieve in it."

﴿أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ هَدَى ٱللَّهُ ۖ فَبِهُدَىٰهُمُ ٱقْتَدِهْ ۗ قُل لَّآ أَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ۖ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرَىٰ لِلْعَٰلَمِينَ﴾

"Such are the ones whom God has guided, so copy their guidance. SAY: "I do not ask you any fee for it; it is only a Reminder to [everybody in] the Universe!"[1]

These holy verses hold emphasis that Allah the Almighty, throughout history, had certain persons whom He designated to the office of ruling over the people. From the Prophet Noah to the Holy Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥), Allah the Almighty selected these persons and given them the Book, the right to judgment, and prophethood. Hence, the holy verse says: Those whom Allah gave the book, judgment, and prophethood, and sent as leaders for the peoples came to judge among their peoples with justice; and this has been taking place constantly throughout history, and not in a specific period of it.

Hence, the divine Imamate is not restricted to a certain period; rather, it has been continuous throughout the history of mankind.

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1. Qur'an *An`am 6/84-90.*

Second Form: The Qur'¡nic verses confirming that the Imams are from the descendants of Prophet Abraham are variously numerous.

(1) Some of these verses hold that Allah the Almighty gave Prophet Abraham the good tidings that He would make him and his offspring righteous leaders (Imams) who would guide to the truth by the command of Allah, as a response to Prophet Abraham's prayer when he was young and in the climax of his clash with the polytheists and atheists in general and his father in particular. Referring to this incident and to the prayer of Prophet Abraham, the Holy Qur'¡n reads,

﴿وَٱتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ﴾

"Recite Abraham's news to them..."

﴿إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِۦ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ﴾

"...when he said to his father and his folk: "What are you worshipping?"

﴿قَالُوا۟ نَعْبُدُ أَصْنَامًا فَنَظَلُّ لَهَا عَٰكِفِينَ﴾

"They said; "We worship idols, and are utterly devoted to them."

﴿قَالَ هَلْ يَسْمَعُونَكُمْ إِذْ تَدْعُونَ﴾

"He said; "Do they hear you when you call..."

﴿أَوْ يَنفَعُونَكُمْ أَوْ يَضُرُّونَ﴾

"...or benefit you or harm [you]?"

﴿قَالُواْ بَلْ وَجَدْنَا ءَابَاءَنَا كَذَٰلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ﴾

"They said: "Rather we found our fathers doing so."

﴿قَالَ أَفَرَءَيْتُم مَّا كُنتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ﴾

"He said: "Have you ever seen what you have been worshipping..."

﴿أَنتُمْ وَءَابَاؤُكُمُ ٱلْأَقْدَمُونَ﴾

"...you and your forefathers, the oldtimers?"

﴿فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّى إِلَّا رَبَّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ﴾

"They are enemies of mine, except for the Lord of the Universe..."

﴿ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَنِى فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ﴾

"Who created me. He guides me..."

﴿وَٱلَّذِى هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِى وَيَسْقِينِ﴾

"...and is the One Who feeds me and gives me something to drink."

﴿وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ﴾

"Whenever I fall ill, He heals me..."

﴿وَٱلَّذِى يُمِيتُنِى ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ﴾

"[He is] the One Who will cause me to die, then bring me back to life [again]..."

﴿وَٱلَّذِى أَطْمَعُ أَن يَغْفِرَ لِى خَطِيـَٔتِى يَوْمَ ٱلدِّينِ﴾

"...the One Who I expect will forgive me my mistakes on the Day for Repayment."

﴿رَبِّ هَبْ لِى حُكْمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِى بِٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ﴾

"My Lord, bestow discretion on me and acquaint me with honourable men!"[1]

Prophet Abraham said this prayer when he was young and during the lifetime of his father. At that time, he was struggling against his people and his father and he was in Babylon when he prayed to Allah to give him wisdom and make him a leader who judges between the people with truth and guides them to justice and the straight path of Allah. He also matched another prayer to this one in which he asked his Lord to give him righteous descendants so that they would continue his march and carry his message to the next generations. He thus said,

﴿وَٱجْعَل لِّى لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِى ٱلْـَٔاخِرِينَ﴾

"Grant me a truthful reputation among later men."[2]

Prophet Abraham also said,

﴿رَبِّ هَبْ لِى حُكْمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِى بِٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ﴾

"My Lord, bestow discretion on me and acquaint me with honourable men!"[3]

Declaring that He responded to Abraham's prayer, the Almighty said,

1. Qur'an *Shu`ara 26/69-83.*
2. Qur'an *Shu`ara 26/84*.
3. Qur'an *Shu`ara 26/83.*

﴿وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُۥٓ إِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِى ذُرِّيَّتِهِ ٱلنُّبُوَّةَ وَٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَءَاتَيْنَٰهُ أَجْرَهُۥ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَإِنَّهُۥ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ لَمِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ﴾

"We bestowed Isaac and Jacob on him, and granted prophethood and the Book to his offspring. We gave him his payment in this world, while in the Hereafter he will be among the honourable."[1]

The worldly reward seems to stand for rule and Imamate. In this regard, exegetes of the Holy Qur'¡n, while explaining the following verse of the story of Prophet Joseph, explain the divine reward in this world as rule and kingdom:

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ يَتَبَوَّأُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَآءُ ۚ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَن نَّشَآءُ ۖ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾

"Thus We established Joseph in the land, to budget for it in any way he wished. We confer Our mercy on anyone We wish to and never let the earnings of those who act kindly get lost."[2]

Im¡m Khomeini, explaining this Qur'¡nic section:

"Our Lord, give us something fine in this world."[3] ﴿رَبَّنَا ءَاتِنَا فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً﴾, says, "The good of this world stands for Imamate, authority, and kingdom that the Almighty gives to His righteous servants and by which they establish His rule on the earth, spread justice, and purify His lands from polytheism and injustice."

1. Qur'an *Ankabut 29/27*.
2. Qur'an *Yusuf 12/56*.
3. Qur'an *Baqara 2/201*.

(2) On another occasion, the Holy Qur'¡n reads,

﴿وَإِذِ ٱبۡتَلَىٰٓ إِبۡرَٰهِيمَ رَبُّهُۥ بِكَلِمَٰتٖ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّۖ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامٗاۖ قَالَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِيۖ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهۡدِي ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ﴾

"When his Lord tested Abraham by means of [certain] words, and he fulfilled them, He said: "I am going to make you into a leader for mankind." He said: "What about my offspring?"; He said: "My pledge does not apply to evildoers." [1]

This "additional gift" is the virtuous offspring that Allah the Almighty made Imams as a response to Prophet Abraham's prayer. The verse thus confirms this response.

(3) On another occasion, the Holy Qur'¡n reads,

﴿أَمۡ يَحۡسُدُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ عَلَىٰ مَآ ءَاتَىٰهُمُ ٱللَّهُ مِن فَضۡلِهِۦۖ فَقَدۡ ءَاتَيۡنَآ ءَالَ إِبۡرَٰهِيمَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ وَءَاتَيۡنَٰهُم مُّلۡكًا عَظِيمٗا﴾

"Or do they envy people because of what God has given them out of His bounty? We already gave Abraham's family the Book and wisdom, and We gave them splendid control." [2]

This holy verse indicates that Allah the Almighty responded to the prayer of Prophet Abraham and gave him a great kingdom; that is, Imamate as an additional gift besides the Book and wisdom, which both represent prophethood.

(4) Among the other verses is the following:

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1. Qur'an *Baqara 2/124.*
2. Qur'an *Nisa 4/54.*

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰٓ ءَادَمَ وَنُوحًا وَءَالَ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَءَالَ عِمْرَٰنَ عَلَى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ﴾

"God selected Adam and Noah, Abraham's House and 'Imran's House over [everyone in] the Universe."

﴿ذُرِّيَّةًۢ بَعْضُهَا مِنۢ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

"Some of their offspring are descended from others. God is Alert, Aware.[1]"

In this holy verse, we can put our hands on two sorts of divine selection:

First: Individual selection, which means the selection of Adam, Noah… etc. as individuals.

Second: Family selection, which means the selection of the family of Abraham and the family of `Imr¡n. Because the family of `Imr¡n is part of the family of Abraham, the conjunction of the earlier to the latter is expressed by Arabic grammarians as conjoining the particular to the general. It also indicates that this family selection passed through two stages: first, the selection of the family of Abraham and, second, the selection of the family of `Imr¡n within the family of Abraham. For this reason, the next verses came to give explanation for this implicit selection by saying,

﴿إِذْ قَالَتِ ٱمْرَأَتُ عِمْرَٰنَ رَبِّ إِنِّى نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِى بَطْنِى مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّىٓ ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ﴾

"Thus a woman [from the House] of 'Imran said: "My Lord, I have freely consecrated whatever is in my womb to You. Accept it from me; You are Alert, Aware!"[1]

1. Qur'an *Aal-imran 3/33-4*.

﴿إِذْ قَالَتِ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ يَٰمَرْيَمُ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ ٱسْمُهُ ٱلْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ ٱلْمُقَرَّبِينَ﴾

"Thus the angels said: "Mary, God announces word to you about someone whose name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, [who is] well regarded in this world and the Hereafter, and one of those drawn near [to God]."[2]

As understood by these holy verses, there is a divine selection within another divine selection; i.e. the family of `Imr¡n was selected within the family of Abraham.

By adjoining the notion of these verses to the verse of Prophet Abraham's prayer to his Lord to make Imamate run in his offspring

﴿وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِى ۖ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ﴾

"What about my offspring?"; He said: "My pledge does not apply to evildoers." [3]

we conclude that Allah the Almighty responded to the prayer of His prophet and made Imamate run in his offspring on the basis of capabilities and qualifications that are expressed as divine selection (*i¥§if¡'*). Thus, Imamate having been made in the offspring of Abraham was not because these persons – whom were divinely selected as Imams – were from the offspring of Abraham; rather, these persons became Imams because they met all the capabilities and qualifications of leadership due to which they deserved the title of the divine selection.

1. Qur'an *Aal-imran 3/35.*
2. Qur'an *Aal-imran 3/45.*
3. Qur'an *Baqara 2/124.*

Hence, the divine covenant will never include wrongdoers from among the offspring of Prophet Abraham and will not include the good-doers unless these good-doers meet the qualifications of divine selection. Accordingly, Imamate was gained by the family of `Imr¡n from among the members of the family of Abraham because the qualification of Imamate was found with this clan within the family of Abraham. Similarly, the family of Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥) gained this divine selection inside the family of Abraham as a whole. Expressing the divine selection of the Holy Prophet's family, the Qur'¡n reads,

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾

"God merely wants to remove any blight from you [since you are] People of the [Prophet's] House, and to cleanse you thoroughly."[1]

What is more, this family selection is based on definite capabilities and qualifications (of leadership), but it is not based on kinship alone. Confirming this fact, a Qur'¡nic verse reads,

﴿ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِن بَعْضٍ﴾

"Some of their offspring are descended from others."[2]

In this verse, "*one of another*" has nothing to do with kinship relation; rather, it is a relation that is appertained to conveying the messages of the Lord properly and perfectly. In other words, divine selection is endowed to a clan only because this clan represents the values and

1. Qur'an *Ahzab 33/33.*
2. Qura'n *Aal-imran 3/34.*

principles that were represented by its founder and chief. Confirming this fact, too, the Almighty, in his discourse with Prophet Noah, says,

﴿رَبِّ إِنَّ ٱبۡنِي مِنۡ أَهۡلِي وَإِنَّ وَعۡدَكَ ٱلۡحَقُّ وَأَنتَ أَحۡكَمُ ٱلۡحَٰكِمِينَ﴾

"My Lord, my son belonged to my own family, while Your promise is true, and You are the wisest Judge!"

﴿قَالَ يا نُوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ ۖ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صالِحٍ﴾

"He said: "Noah, he no longer belongs to your family: his behaviour was dishonourable."[1]

According to the notion of this holy verse, a family member is only one who is spiritually harmonious with the chief of the prophetic family; therefore, not every one who is genealogically related to a family should be regarded as one of the members of that family. For example, one who is a next of kin of a prophet is not necessarily decided as a member of the family of that prophet whom the Almighty sent for guiding the people to the truth. The same thing can be said about the offspring that is deprived of divine selection. Therefore, the divinely selected offspring of a prophet is only one who can truly be regarded as part of the personality of that prophet whose divine selection was made on the basis of his perfect obedience to the Almighty and thorough submission to His will. The Holy Qur'¡n thus used the word *Isl¡m* to express such perfect obedience and thorough submission to the Almighty.

1. Qura'n *Hud 11/45-6.*

In view of that, the Holy Qur'¡n calls attentions to the fact that "Islam" was a covenant that the descendants of Prophet Abraham transmitted to one another. Hence, the Qur'¡n reads,

﴿وَمَن يَرْغَبُ عَن مِّلَّةِ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ إِلَّا مَن سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُۥ ۚ وَلَقَدِ ٱصْطَفَيْنَٰهُ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَإِنَّهُۥ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ لَمِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ﴾

"Who would shrink from [joining] Abraham's sect except someone who fools himself? We selected him during worldly life, while in the Hereafter he will be among the honourable ones."

﴿إِذْ قَالَ لَهُۥ رَبُّهُۥٓ أَسْلِمْ ۖ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ﴾

"So when his Lord told him: "Commit yourself to [live in] peace"; he said: "I have already committed myself peacefully to the Lord of the Universe!"

﴿وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَٰهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَٰبَنِىَّ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ ٱلدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ﴾

"Abraham commissioned his sons with it [as a legacy], and [so did] Jacob: "My sons, God has selected your religion for you. Do not die unless you are Muslims."

﴿أَمْ كُنتُمْ شُهَدَآءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ ٱلْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنۢ بَعْدِى قَالُوا۟ نَعْبُدُ إِلَٰهَكَ وَإِلَٰهَ ءَابَآئِكَ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَٰقَ إِلَٰهًا وَٰحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُۥ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

"Or were you present as death appeared for Jacob, when he said to his sons: "What will you serve after I am gone?" They said: "We shall worship your God and the

God of your forefathers Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac: God Alone! We are committed peacefully to Him." [1]

The point unmistakably indicated by these verses is that the divine Imamate that is based on the divine selection is continuous in the offspring of Abraham throughout history. The Qur'¡nic texts: "*'…And of my offspring?' 'My covenant does not include the unjust,' said He.*'" and "*Allah chose Adam… and the descendants of Abraham*" and "*and We have given them a grand kingdom*" – these Qur'¡nic verses and many others bespeak the fact that the divine selection of Abraham's family is continuous and the different stages of the history of mankind have witnessed special divine selections within the family of Abraham, the last of which was the divine selection of the family of the Holy Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥). Shortly in this book, more light will be shed on this point.

(5) Among other Qur'¡nic verses that certify that the Imams should be from the descendants of Prophet Abraham is this:

﴿أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ عَلَىٰ مَا ءَاتَىٰهُمُ ٱللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِۦ ۖ فَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا ءَالَ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَءَاتَيْنَٰهُم مُّلْكًا عَظِيمًا﴾

"Or do they envy people because of what God has given them out of His bounty? We already gave Abraham's family the Book and wisdom, and We gave them splendid control." [2]

This holy verse shows that Allah the Almighty endowed the family of Abraham with a grand kingdom in addition

1. Quran *Baqara 2/130-3*.
2. Quran *Nisa 4/54.*

to prophethood, which corresponds to the Book and wisdom. The word *mulk* means authority and rule; so, *mulk*, or kingdom, stands for the divine Imamate.

It is noteworthy to draw attentions to the Qur'¡nic expression: "*do they envy the people?*" Here, the following question jumps to mind: Who are these envied persons whom Allah the Almighty, as mentioned in this holy verse, has given, out of His grace, an additional virtue more than that which He gave to other people?

The context of the holy verse manifestly demonstrates that these persons are a group of believers who were contemporaries of the Holy Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥) and they must be of the descendants of Prophet Abraham, because the holy verse matched the grace that the Almighty gave to these envied believers; the Book, wisdom, and a splendid kingdom that He gave to the family of Abraham.

Again, the context of the holy verse and other Qur'¡nic verses that support its meaning reveal that these persons are the family members of the Holy Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥).

Many traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (i.e. the Holy Prophet's Household) regard that the envied people mentioned in the relevant verse are the Imams from the family of the Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥).

In his book entitled *al-K¡f¢*, Shaykh al-Kulayn¢ reported the following:

Imam Mu¦ammad al-B¡qir is reported to have explained the (specific) holy verse as follows: "The kingdom that is mentioned in the verse stands for the Imamate and

succession (to the Holy Prophet Mu¦ammad)… We are the envied people; the people envy us for the Imamate that Allah has given us other than all of His creatures."[1]

A clearly identifiable proof of the authenticity of this explanation is the fact that these Qur'¡nic verses give an account of a contemporary event that actually took place at the time of the revelation of these verses. They also specify that there was a group of contemporary persons, who envied another group of believers for the special grace that Allah the Almighty had given to them, and these envied believers had a relationship with the Prophet Abraham; i.e. they were from the descendants of Abraham. In these verses, the Holy Qur'¡n reproaches these envious persons who harboured malice against the family of Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥) for the grace that Allah the Almighty had exclusively given them, as well as the people who openly rejected this divine selection of Mu¦ammad's Household. Reproving these persons, the Holy Qur'¡n clarifies that such grace had been also given to the family of Abraham, and those enviers had already submitted to the grace given to Abraham's family; but why were they now denying and antagonizing the family of Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥) for having been given the like of this grace?

As has been previously asserted, the Almighty put Imamate in the family members of Abraham and this Imamate ran continuously in them only because they had the capabilities and met the requirements specified by Him for those who would lead the community. Therefore, Imamate is given exclusively to those who possess such

1. Shaykh al-Kulayn¢, *al-K¡f¢* 1:395.

divine capabilities and qualifications from among the descendants of Prophet Abraham, but it is not given to everyone who is a relative of Abraham.

The verses of the Holy Qur'¡n also cite another fact; Imamate might be taken away from a certain clan of Abraham's family and passed on to another when the earlier loses its capabilities and qualifications through the passage of time. This fact has been cited in some Qur'¡nic verses in a general mode, such as:

﴿تُؤْتِى ٱلْمُلْكَ مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَنزِعُ ٱلْمُلْكَ مِمَّن تَشَاء﴾

"You give control to anyone You wish and snatch control from anyone You wish."[1]

while other verses introduce it in a special form:

﴿أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ مِن ذُرِّيَّةِ ءَادَمَ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّةِ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَإِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ وَمِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَٱجْتَبَيْنَا ۚ إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَٰتُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ خَرُّوا۟ سُجَّدًا وَبُكِيًّا ۩﴾

"Those are some of the prophets from Adam's offspring whom God has favoured, and some of those We transported along with Noah, and some of Abraham's and Ishmael's offspring, as well as some (others) We have guided and chosen. Whenever the Mercy-giving's signs are recited to them, they drop down on their knees and weep!"

﴿فَخَلَفَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَٱتَّبَعُوا۟ ٱلشَّهَوَٰتِ﴾

1. Quran *Aal-imran 3/26.*

"Descendants have replaced them who neglected prayer and followed [their own] passions. They shall meet with aimlessness."[1]

The Holy Qur'¡n states on another occasion,

﴿فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِم مِّيثَٰقَهُمْ وَكُفْرِهِم بِـَٔايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ وَقَتْلِهِمُ ٱلْأَنبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ﴾

"Because of their breaking the charter, their disbelief in God's signs, their killing the prophets without any right to do so, and their saying: "Our hearts are covered over."[2]

In these verses, as well as many others, the Holy Qur'¡n highlights that Imamate and divine preference that the Almighty showed to the offspring of Abraham, particularly some descendants of Prophet Isaac and Prophet Jacob, was taken away from them the moment they went astray, deviated from the right path, disbelieved, and committed wrongdoings. Moreover, the divine curse replaced that divine preference.

See these holy Qur'¡nic verses:

﴿فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِم مِّيثَٰقَهُمْ لَعَنَّٰهُمْ﴾

"Since they broke their covenant, We have cursed them."[3]

﴿وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلذِّلَّةُ وَٱلْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاءُو بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ﴾

1. Quran *Maryam 19/58-9.*
2. Quran *Nisa 4/155.*
3. Quran *Maaidah 5/13.*

"Humiliation and poverty beat them down and they incurred anger from God."[1]

Thus, Imamate was carried off from the descendants of Isaac from the family of Abraham and transmitted to the immaculate descendants of Prophet Ishmael the son of Abraham; namely, the holy family members of Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥).

The Holy Qur'¡n also reads,

﴿إِنَّ أَوْلَى ٱلنَّاسِ بِإِبْرَٰهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَٰذَا ٱلنَّبِيُّ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا﴾

"The closest people to Abraham are those who follow him, as well as this Prophet and those who believe."[2]

This verse holds the insinuation that the divinely-given Imamate was carried away from certain descendants of Abraham only after they had failed to meet its requirements and qualifications, while the other descendants who received it continued to satisfy its requirements. The verse thus affirms that those who have the best claim to Abraham, the nearest to him, and the most similar to his divine personality are those who followed him, the Prophet, and "those who believe." A close pondering over the Qur'¡nic expression "*those who believe*" and an investigation of its use throughout the Holy Qur'¡n make us believe that the expression has very often been used to speak of certain persons among the believers – persons whose faith attained its climax and gave them the right to leadership over the other believers; therefore, the Almighty has chosen them as leaders of the

1. Quran *Baqara 2/61*.
2. Quran *Aal-imran 3/68.*

believers and successors to the Holy Prophet. The Holy Qur'¡n also mentioned the qualities and features of these persons in their capacity as perfect role-models of the believers and the excellent exemplars that the Almighty ordered the believers to follow after the departure of the Holy Prophet. Some features of these believers have been mentioned in many verses of the Holy Qur'¡n, such as the following:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمْ رَٰكِعُونَ﴾

"Your Patron is God [Alone], as well as His messenger and those who believe-who keep up prayer, pay the welfare tax and bow their heads [in worship]."[1]

﴿أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تُتْرَكُواْ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ جَٰهَدُواْ مِنكُمْ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُواْ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا رَسُولِهِۦ وَلَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلِيجَةً﴾

"Or do you reckon you will be abandoned once God knows which of you have struggled, and did not adopt anyone as an ally besides God, His messenger and believers?"[2]

Third Form: This category includes the Qur'¡nic verses that cite the Imamate of the Holy Imams from the family of the Holy Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥) and introduce it as a religious duty to be obligatorily carried out by all Muslims.

In the previous lines, we have mentioned that the divine wisdom of maintaining and saving the Holy Qur'¡n from

1. Quran *Maaidah 6/55.*
2. Quran *Tawba 9/16.*

distortion necessitated that the Holy Imams who would succeed the Holy Prophet in leading the Muslim community religiously and mundanely must be mentioned suggestively, metonymically, and attributively, but not directly, because mentioning the names of these Imams would have certainly caused the sinful persons who had a fatal desire for power and authority to distort the Qur'¡nic verses or prevent these verses from circulating among the Muslims, like their mischievous actions which they applied to the Holy Prophet's traditions. Because these traditions mentioned the Holy Imams by name, enemies of the Prophet's Household, even during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, started on precluding the Muslims from writing down his words so as to stop spreading them among the Muslims.

Ab£-D¡w£d, in his book *Sunan*, al-D¡rim¢, in *Sunan*, A¦mad ibn °anbal, in *al-Musnad*, and many other scholars of ¦*ad¢th* have reported `Abdull¡h ibn `Amr ibn al-`ª¥ to have said:

I used to write down everything I would hear from the Messenger of Allah, but "*the people of Quraysh*" warned me against doing so, and said, "How come you write down whatever you hear from the Messenger of Allah, while he is an ordinary mortal who may err when enraged?" Since then, I ceased recording his words. I then informed the Messenger of Allah about that. He pointed at his mouth and said, "Write down every thing. I swear by Him Who has my soul in His grip, nothing but truth comes out of my mouth."[1]

1. *Sunan al-D¡rim¢* 1:125; *Sunan Ab¢-D¡w£d* 2:126; *Musnad A¦mad*

Al-Bukh¡r¢, in his ¯a¡¢¡, Muslim, in his ¯a¡¢¡, and many others have reported the following catastrophic incident:

At the last moments of his lifetime, the Holy Prophet was in his house and was surrounded by some men, among whom was `Umar ibn al-Kha§§¡b. The Holy Prophet ordered, "Let me write down for you a document after which you will never go astray." Yet, `Umar said, "The Prophet is being overcome by his ailment! You have the Book of Allah. Sufficient to us is the Book of Allah!" The attendants disputed and quarreled over this issue and some of them supported `Umar in what he had just said. When their dispute and discussion became overheated, the Messenger of Allah said, "Leave me! It is not proper that dispute takes place in my presence."[1]

In his book of *Tadhkirat al-°uff¡¨*, al-Dhahab¢ reports the following:

Immediately after the passing away of the Holy Prophet, Ab£-Bakr gathered the people and delivered an address, saying, "You are reporting from the Messenger of Allah many discourses and you are disagreeing about them. The people who will come after you will be more disagreeing about these than you are now. So, do not report anything from the Messenger of Allah. When you are asked about the reason, you may answer as follows: The Book of Allah is the judge between us. You must thus deem lawful whatever is deemed lawful therein and deem unlawful whatever is deemed unlawful therein."[2]

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ibn °anbal 2:162.

1. ¯a¡¢¡ *al-Bukh¡r¢* 1:22; ¯a¡¢¡ *Muslim, Kit¡b al-Wa¥iyyah.*
2. Al-Dhahab¢, *Tadhkirat al-°uff¡¨* (Chapter: Biography of Ab£-Bakr)

The same thing was carried out by `Umar ibn al-Kha§§¡b and `Uthm¡n ibn `Aff¡n when they became caliphs.[1]

Then, when the dynasty of Umayyah seized power, they did not stop at this verge; rather, they exaggerated in forging lies against the Holy Prophet and exerted all possible efforts in massacring, banishing, and exterminating the descendants and family members of the Holy Prophet until, in less than a half century after the passing away of the Holy Prophet, they wiped out his progeny during the ±aff Battle at Karbal¡'.

For this logical reason, the divine wisdom used the style of metonymy and intimation in introducing the Holy Imams from the Prophet's Household.

Let us now cite a few Qur'¡nic verses that declare the Imamate of the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt:

1- VERSE OF WILªYAH

The Holy Qur'¡n reads,

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمْ رَٰكِعُونَ﴾

"Your Patron is God [Alone], as well as His messenger and those who believe-who keep up prayer, pay the welfare tax and bow their heads [in worship]."[2]

1:2.

1. Sayyid Murta¤¡ al-`Askar¢, *Ma`¡lim al-Madrasatayn* 2:5.
2. Quran *Maaidah 5/55.*

Al-Tha`lab¢, a famous expert in the exegesis of the Holy Qur'¡n, in his book of *tafs¢r*, has reported Ab£-Dharr al-Ghif¡r¢ as saying,

One day, I was following the Messenger of Allah in the Midday Prayer when a beggar asked for something in the mosque, but no one gave him anything. The beggar then raised his hands toward the sky and, praying to God, said, "O Allah, be the witness! I have begged inside the mosque of Your Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥), but no one gave me anything." In the meantime, `Al¢ was in the state of genuflection of a prayer when he made a sign for the beggar to his little finger of his right hand where he wore a ring. The beggar came near and took out the ring from `Al¢'s little finger before the eyes of the Prophet who was still in the mosque. Immediately, the Holy Prophet raised his eyes towards the sky and, praying to the Almighty, said, "O Allah! Beseeching You, my brother (Prophet) Moses said,

﴿قَالَ رَبِّ ٱشْرَحْ لِى صَدْرِى﴾

"He said: "My Lord, ease my breast for me!"

﴿وَيَسِّرْ لِى أَمْرِى﴾

"Make my affair easier for me..."

﴿وَٱحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّن لِّسَانِى﴾

"...and loose a knot from my tongue..."

﴿يَفْقَهُوا۟ قَوْلِى﴾

"So they may understand whatever I say."

﴿وَٱجْعَل لِّى وَزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِى﴾

"Grant me a helpmate from my own people..."

﴿هَٰرُونَ أَخِى﴾

"Aaron, my brother."

﴿ٱشْدُدْ بِهِۦٓ أَزْرِى﴾

"Back me up by means of him..."

﴿وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِى أَمْرِى﴾

"...and let him share in my affair..."[1]
So, you revealed to him a piece of the Qur'¡n, saying,

﴿سَنَشُدُّ عَضُدَكَ بِأَخِيكَ وَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمَا سُلْطَٰنًا فَلَا يَصِلُونَ إِلَيْكُمَا﴾

"We shall strengthen your arm by means of your brother and grant both of you authority so they will not overtake either of you."[2]

O Allah, I am Mu¦ammad, Your Prophet and selected servant! O Allah, expand for me my breast, make easy for me my affairs, and make for me an aide from my family members; namely, `Al¢. Please strengthen my back by him."

The instant the Holy Prophet finished his prayer, the Archangel Gabriel came to him from the Almighty and said, "O Mu¦ammad, read this:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمْ رَٰكِعُونَ﴾[3]

1. Quran *Taha 20/25-32.*
2. Quran *Qasas 28/35*.
3. This tradition has been reported by almost all exegetes of the Holy Qur'¡n. For instance, refer to *Tafs¢r al-±abar¢*, al-W¡¦id¢'s *Asb¡b al-Nuz£l*, and Fakhr al-D¢n al-R¡z¢'s *al-Tafs¢r al-Kab¢r*. For further details, refer to Al-Am¢n¢'s *al-Ghad¢r* 2:52-3.

"Your Patron is God [Alone], as well as His messenger and those who believe-who keep up prayer, pay the welfare tax and bow their heads [in worship]."[1]

Exegetes of the Holy Qur'¡n have unanimously come to an agreement that this holy verse was revealed about `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib. Undoubtedly, the verse holds a clear-cut indication of Imamate, since the Arabic restriction article *innam¡*, with which the holy verse begins, cancels out any other probable meaning of *wal¢* than authority and leader. Although the Arabic word *wal¢* is polysemous (i.e. having many meanings), no other meaning than authority and leader can be given to the word in the context of this holy verse, because this is the one and only meaning that can draw Allah, the Holy Prophet, and Imam `Al¢ together.

2- VERSE OF PURIFICATION

The verse of purification (*ta§h¢r*) is a clear-cut text about the Imamate of the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt. At the time of revelation of the verse, the present Imams were `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib, al-°asan, and al-°usayn. The holy verse reads,

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾

"God merely wants to remove any blight from you [since you are] People of the [Prophet's] House, and to cleanse you thoroughly."[2]

The verse bears an indication of the purity of the Ahl al-Bayt from entire uncleanness (*rijs*). According to Arab

1. Quran *Maaida 5/55.*
2. Quran *Ahzab 33/33.*

lexicographers, the assured amount of the meaning of the Arabic word *rijs* entails that it means uncleanness and any act of disobedience to the Almighty, be it trivial or large. Every impure item that should be eschewed enters under the meaning of the word *rijs*.

Explaining the word *rijs*, Ibn Man¨£r, a famous master lexicographer, says, "The word *rijs* means filth and uncleanness. Thus, every dirty thing is called *rijs*."

The word has been used in the Holy Qur'¡n on more than one occasion. Whenever it was used in the Qur'¡n, it came to mean uncleanness.

For instance, the Almighty says, "*Maaida 5/90"*

﴿وَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ فِى قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَتْهُمْ رِجْسًا إِلَىٰ رِجْسِهِمْ﴾

"As for those whose hearts contain malice, well it adds squalor to their own squalor."[1]

﴿إِلَّا أَن يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَّسْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خِنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ﴾

"...unless it is something that has died [by itself] or it is blood which has already been shed, or pork - that is so filthy."[2]

In brief, the word *rijs*, in its least meaning, stands for whatever should be eschewed. It goes without saying that any act of disobedience to the Almighty, be it trivial or large, should be eschewed. Accordingly, the meaning of purifying the Ahl al-Bayt from uncleanness must be that they are purified from committing any sin, be it trivial or crucial.

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1. Quran *Tawba 9/125*.
2. Quran *An`am 6/145.*

As maintained by innumerable and uninterruptedly reported traditions, all Muslims have unanimously declared that the Verse of Purification was revealed about the Holy Prophet, Imam `Al¢, Lady F¡§imah, Imam al-°asan, and Imam al-°usayn (peace be upon them all).

In his book of ¯a¦¢¦, Muslim reported, under Chapter: Virtues of the Holy Prophet's Household that the verse was revealed about these five persons. So did al-Tirmidh¢, in his book of *Sunan*, and many other compilers of reference books of ¦*ad¢th*.[1]

However, this divine purification does not include the Holy Prophet's wives. According to an authentically and uninterruptedly transmitted tradition, Ummu-Salamah, a wife of the Holy Prophet, reported the following:

The Verse of Purification was revealed in my chamber where there were seven beings: (Archangel) Gabriel, (Archangel) Michael, `Al¢, F¡§imah, al-°asan, and al-°usayn. I was standing at the door of the chamber when I asked the Prophet, "O Allah's Messenger! Am I not one of the Ahl al-Bayt?" He answered, "You are moving towards goodness, but you are only one of the wives of the Prophet."[2]

The holy verse's denotation to the Imamate of the Ahl al-Bayt can be concluded as follows: The holy verse, "*My covenant does not include the unjust*" indicates that infallibility is one of the conditional qualifications of the

1. Details can be referred to in Sayyid Murta¤¡ al-`Askar¢'s book entitled: *Ma`¡lim al-Madrasatayn* 1:362, Chapter: Infallibility of the Ahl al-Bayt.
2. A¦mad ibn °anbal, *al-Musnad* 6:306.

Imam, and infallibility cannot be recognized except by Allah the Almighty Who did not refer to the infallibility of anyone except these persons from the Holy Prophet's household. The verse of purification has informed of their infallibility; therefore, it must denote their Imamate.

In addition, it has been previously mentioned that the imperative verb in the verse: "*and obey the Messenger and the men of authority among you*" has come in one form only, while the earlier part of the verse reads, "*obey Allah*" has had its own imperative verb. This means that the duty of obedience that is verified for the Messenger is also verified for the "men in authority" because obedience to both the Messenger and these men in authority has been gathered in one imperative verb. Of course, obedience to the Messenger is absolutely and unconditionally obligatory upon all Muslims, according to many Qur'¡nic texts such as the following:

﴿مَا ءَاتَىٰكُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَىٰكُمْ عَنْهُ فَٱنتَهُوا﴾

"Accept anything the Messenger may give you, and keep away from anything he withholds from you."[1]

﴿فَلْيَحْذَرِ ٱلَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِۦٓ أَن تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

"Let anyone who opposes his order beware lest some trial afflict them or some painful torment should befall them!"[2]

﴿مَّن يُطِعِ ٱلرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ ٱللَّهَ﴾

"Anyone who obeys the Messenger has obeyed God [Himself]."[1]

1. Quran *Hashr 59/7*.
2. Quran *Noor 24/63.*

All these Qur'¡nic verses and many others establish that whatever is said by the Holy Messenger is part of the divine revelation that is obligatory upon all believers to carry out, because, on the word of the Qur'¡n, about the Holy Messenger:

﴿وَمَا يَنطِقُ عَنِ ٱلْهَوَىٰ﴾

"He does not speak from some whim..."

﴿إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْىٌ يُوحَىٰ﴾

"...it is merely inspiration that is revealed [to him]."[2]

As a result, the divine command of obeying the Messenger means that he must be obeyed in every matter, be it small or big, as well as in every command that he issues. Such kind of obedience cannot be shown except for the infallible one who neither goes wrong nor errs. The verse of obedience to the Messenger and the "men in authority" must thus mean that these "men in authority" are infallible and thoroughly purified from all uncleanness.

There is no evidence provided for proving the infallibility of any other persons than the Ahl al-Bayt whose infallibility and thorough purification have been clearly cited in the Verse of Purification; therefore, they must unquestionably be the very "men in authority," obedience to whom has been made obligatory by Allah the Almighty, Who also warned against going against them.

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1. Quran *Nisa 4/80.*
2. Quran *Najm 53/3-4.*

3- VERSE OF RELATIVES

Also called the Verse of Love (*mawaddah*), the Verse of Relatives is one of the Qur'¡nic texts that denote the Imamate of the Ahl al-Bayt after the Holy Prophet. It reads,

﴿قُل لَّا أَسۡـَٔلُكُمۡ عَلَيۡهِ أَجۡرًا إِلَّا ٱلۡمَوَدَّةَ فِى ٱلۡقُرۡبَىٰ﴾

"SAY: "I do not ask you any payment for it except affection towards your relatives."[1]

The holy verse signifies that love for the near relatives of the Holy Prophet is obligatory upon all Muslims and that Allah the Almighty has made it the reward for the Holy Prophet's perfect conveyance of the Lord's message. Consequently, because love for these relatives has been made so, it must be equal in significance, importance, and rank to the message that the Holy Prophet conveyed perfectly. As a general rule, rewards for a deed must be equal in value and merit to the deed itself; otherwise, the reward would not be fair. Far be it from Allah the Almighty to give an unfair reward for the most important deed in the universe; namely, the conveyance of the divine mission by the Seal of the Prophets.

A deep investigation of other Qur'¡nic texts that refer to rewards make us realize the actual purport of this reward.

The Almighty says,

﴿قُلۡ مَا أَسۡـَٔلُكُمۡ عَلَيۡهِ مِنۡ أَجۡرٍ إِلَّا مَن شَاءَ أَن يَتَّخِذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِۦ سَبِيلًا﴾

"Say, 'I do not ask you any reward for it, expect that anyone who wishes should take the way to his Lord."[1]

1. Quran *Sh£r¡ 42/23.*

This holy verse holds a clear-cut proof that the reward that Allah the Almighty gives to the Holy Prophet for his conveying the Message is nothing but finding a path taking a follower to Him.

In another verse, the Almighty describes the Holy Qur'¡n as a path leading to Him. He thus says,

﴿إِنَّ هَٰذِهِۦ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۖ فَمَن شَآءَ ٱتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِۦ سَبِيلًا﴾

"This is a Reminder so let anyone, who so wishes, adopt a way unto his Lord."[2]

Thus, the Almighty introduces the Relatives of the Holy Prophet as matches of the Holy Qur'¡n, given that both of them is a path leading to the Almighty. Besides, the Holy Prophet is also introduced as a path taking people to the Almighty, as is maintained by these Qur'¡nic verses:

﴿وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ ٱلظَّالِمُ عَلَىٰ يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَٰلَيْتَنِى ٱتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ ٱلرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا﴾

"...a day when the wrongdoer will gnaw away at his hands. He will say: "It's too bad for me! If I had only taken a pathway alongside the Messenger!"

"True control will belong to the Mercy giving on that day. It will be a harsh day for disbelievers..."

﴿يَٰوَيْلَتَىٰ لَيْتَنِى لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا﴾

"It's too bad for me! If I had not adopted So-and-So as a close friend!"[3]

﴿لَّقَدْ أَضَلَّنِى عَنِ ٱلذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَآءَنِى ۗ وَكَانَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ لِلْإِنسَٰنِ خَذُولًا﴾

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1. Quran *Furqan 25/57.*
2. Quran *Muzzammil 73/19.*
3. Quran *Furqan 25/27-9.*

Certainly he led me astray from the Reminder after it had come to me, and Satan is a deserter of man.

The most noteworthy point in these verses is that they indicate that the only things that mark out the path to be taken by man are friendship and love. The verses thus recount the regret and remorse of the unjust people for missing the opportunity of taking a path with the Messenger of Allah. Pointing out the form of missing such a path, the verses state that these unjust ones have betaken themselves other friends than the Holy Messenger. Friendship of other than the Holy Prophet thus means taking other persons than him as leaders and imams. Thus, the verses indicate that friendship and love stand for following and patterning after someone. So, the regret of the unjust ones on the Resurrection Day will be endless, because they missed following the example of the messenger and missed taking him as friend and path reaching them to the Almighty.

At any rate, the holy Qur'¡nic verses leave no room for doubting that what is meant by “love for the Relatives” is that they must be taken as paths towards Allah the Almighty; and taking them as paths towards the Almighty means that they must be followed, imitated, and taken as Imams to be obeyed in whatever they enjoin or forbid, just like the Holy Prophet with regard to the religious duty of obeying him and abiding by his orders.

Within the points that facilitate understanding of the Qur'¡nic sense of the Verse of Relatives is the following holy verse that was revealed about designating Imam `Al¢ to the Imamate on that famous day at Khumm Spring (i.e. Ghad¢r Day). The Almighty thus says in this verse:

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۖ وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُۥ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ﴾

"O Messenger, deliver whatever has been sent down to you by your Lord. If you do not do so, you will not have conveyed His message. God will defend you from mankind..."[1]

Authentic and uninterruptedly reported traditions bear out that this holy verse was revealed on that day at Khumm Spring (*ghad¢r*), ordering the Holy Prophet to convey to all Muslims the divine command of designating `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib to Imamate.

In this holy verse, we can see that the Almighty made the mission of delivering the Imamate of `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib equal to the mission of conveying the message of Allah as a whole. The verse as such emphasizes that if the Holy Prophet would not declare the Imamate of `Al¢ before all the people, he would be considered as if he had not delivered the message of his Lord. Similar to this, we have found in the Verse of Relatives and the other verses that mention about taking a path to Allah that the love for the Relatives was made equal to the reward of the Holy Prophet for perfectly conveying the message of the Lord and was introduced as a path that leads to the Almighty. Thus, love for the Holy Prophet's relatives and taking a path to the Almighty have been brought together as one matter. Similarly, love for *such a one* (mentioned in S£rah al-Furq¡n, Verse 28), which represents any other person than the Holy Prophet's relatives, has been introduced as turning away from the path of Allah and the Messenger,

1. Quran *Maaida 5/67*.

and a reason for the regret and unavailing sorrow of the unjust ones on Resurrection Day.

On the word of the numerous authentically and uninterruptedly reported traditions by all Muslims and the unanimous agreement of their master scholars, the Relatives mentioned in the verse at issue are namely `Al¢, F¡§imah, al-°asan, and al-°usayn.

Al-Am¢n¢, a well-versed scholar, in his encyclopaedic book of *al-Ghad¢r*, says: A¦mad ibn °anbal, in *al-Man¡qib*, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Ab¢-°¡tam, al-±abar¡n¢, Ibn Mardawayh, al-W¡¦id¢, al-Tha`lab¢, Ab£-Na`¢m, al-Baghaw¢, in his book of *tafs¢r*, and Ibn al-Magh¡zil¢, in his book of *al-Man¡qib* – all these scholars have reported Ibn `Abb¡s, through their reliable chains of authority, as saying: "When this verse (i.e. the Verse of Relatives) was revealed, some people asked the Holy Prophet, 'O Allah's Messenger! Who are these relatives, the love for whom has been made obligatory upon us?' The Prophet answered, 'They are `Al¢, F¡§imah, and their two sons.'"[1]

It is worth mentioning that the *reward* mentioned in the verse is not of the kind of the rewards that people usually and familiarly receive in return for a service that they do to others; rather, the *reward* here means fruit and result. To explain, the reward of a farmer who cultivates land and a peasant who irrigates and looks after a tree is the product of that land and the fruit of that tree. Generally speaking, the true reward obtained by any worker is the product of the efforts he has exerted in his work.

1. For details, refer to Al-Am¢n¢, *al-Ghad¢r* 2:306 and on.

The reward mentioned in the holy verse is of this kind, which is also indicated by the meaning of the path that takes those that travel on it to the Almighty.

To come to the point, the reward for conveying the divine message is the response of believers to the Messenger's call for following the path of Allah and stability on it through obeying and following the Ahl al-Bayt after him. By following this path and obeying these persons, the efforts of the Holy Prophet, in conveying the message of his Lord, would succeed through the establishment of justice on the earth, the spread of divine guidance, and the achievement of the promise of Allah the Almighty Who says,

﴿وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ﴾

"God has promised to appoint those of you who believe and perform honourable deeds as [His] representatives on earth."[1]

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ ٱلْقُرَىٰٓ ءَامَنُواْ وَٱتَّقَوْاْ لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَٰتٍ مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَاءِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ﴾

"If the townsfolk had (only) believed and done their duty, We would have showered blessings from Heaven and Earth on them."[2]

﴿هُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُۥ بِٱلْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ ٱلْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُۥ عَلَى ٱلدِّينِ كُلِّهِۦ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ ٱلْمُشْرِكُونَ﴾

"He is the One Who has sent His messenger with guidance and the True Religion so He may cause it to

1. Quran *noor 24/55*.
2. Quran *A`raf 7/96*.

prevail over all [other] religion, no matter how associators may hate it."[1]

All this is the fruit of the Holy Prophet's efforts in this world. As for the otherworldly effort, it is expressed by this holy verse:

﴿وَمَن يُطِعِ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلرَّسُولَ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ مَعَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ ٱلنَّبِيِّينَ وَٱلصِّدِّيقِينَ وَٱلشُّهَدَاءِ وَٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ۚ وَحَسُنَ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ رَفِيقًا﴾

"Anyone who obeys God and the Messenger stands by those whom God has favoured, such as prophets, loyal persons, martyrs and honourable men. How fine are such companions!"

﴿ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْفَضْلُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ عَلِيمًا﴾

"That means bounty from God; it is enough for God to be Aware."[2]

Because this reward is to the advantage of the believers, but not the Holy Prophet in person, the Holy Qur'¡n confirms that it is not of the kind of the familiar rewards that are obtained by people in return for certain works they accomplish so as to gain their profits. Therefore, the holy verse came to deny that the Holy Prophet should obtain such a kind of reward for conveying the message of his Lord, saying,

﴿قُل لَّآ أَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ۖ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرَىٰ لِلْعَٰلَمِينَ﴾

"SAY: "I do not ask you any fee for it; it is only a Reminder to [everybody in] the Universe!"[1]

1. Quran *Tawba 9/33*.
2. Quran *Nisa 4/69-70*.

Explaining and shedding more light on the kind of the reward that the Holy Prophet refused to ask them for, Allah the Almighty says,

﴿أَمْ تَسْـَٔلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُم مِّن مَّغْرَمٍ مُّثْقَلُونَ﴾

"Or are you asking them for some fee so they will feel weighted down with debt?"[2]

4- VERSE OF DELIVERING THE MESSAGE

Addressing the Holy Prophet, Allah the Almighty says,

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۖ وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُۥ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ﴾

"O Messenger, deliver whatever has been sent down to you by your Lord. If you do not do so, you will not have conveyed His message. God will defend you from mankind..."[3]

This holy verse clearly discloses that Allah the Almighty revealed to His Messenger the command of declaring `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib as the next Imam and leader after him. The context of the verse also confirms that it was revealed concerning the issue of Imamate, because it was revealed at a late time of the Holy Prophet's lifetime during his final ritual pilgrimage, which is known as the Farewell Pilgrimage, after he had accomplished the mission of conveying and bringing to light the religion and laws of Allah the Almighty perfectly, and nothing had remained

1. Quran *An`am 6/90.*
2. Quran *Toor 52/40.*
3. Quran *Maaida 5/67.*

undelivered except the issue of Imamate and the next leadership of the Muslim community, even though the Holy Prophet had very frequently clarified this issue on special occasions that were not witnessed by all the Muslims. Hence, the divine command of conveying the issue of Imamate to all Muslims was revealed on that congregational occasion.

One of the obvious points of evidence proving that the verse was revealed concerning the issue of Imamate is the divine confirmation that "*If you do it not, then you have not delivered His message*," which also demonstrates the utmost importance of this issue; therefore, Allah the Almighty states that the duty of conveying the issue of Imamate is equal in significance to the duty of conveying the divine message as a whole. This is so because the conveyance of the issue of Imamate insures the achievement of the objectives of the divine message, and unless the issue of Imamate was conveyed to the people, the goals and purposes of the divine message – the most important of which was the establishment of justice on the entire earth – would not be achieved.

Innumerable authentically and uninterruptedly reported traditions have confirmed that the holy verse was revealed on that day at *Ghad¢r Khumm* to express the importance of conveying the next leadership of `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib.[1]

For instance, al-Suy£§¢, in his book of *al-Durr al-Manth£r,* as well as many other master scholars, reported `Abdull¡h ibn Mas`£d to have said,

1. Details of these traditions can be referred to in al-Am¢n¢'s encyclopedic book of *al-Ghad¢r* 1:214 and on.

During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, we used to recite this holy verse as follows: *O Messenger! Deliver what bas been revealed to you from your Lord* – that `Al¢ is the master of the believers – *and if you do it not…* etc.[1]

In one of the ways of narrating the famous tradition of Ghad¢r, Ab£-Ja`far Mu¦ammad ibn Jar¢r al-±abar¢ has reported the following narration in his book entitled *al-Wil¡yah*, through his reliable chain of authority:

Zayd ibn Arqam says: Immediately after accomplishing the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Messenger of Allah resided at a place near the Khumm Spring (*ghad¢r*). It was early morning on an extremely hot day when he ordered his companions to sweep a height there. When they did, he called all people to gather around him. When we did, he delivered an eloquent sermon in which he said, "Allah the Almighty has revealed to me that I should deliver what was revealed to me from my Lord, and if I do it not, I will not be considered to have delivered the message of my Lord, and Allah will protect me against the people. Then, Gabriel ordered me, on behalf of my Lord, to bring all of you together in such a place and inform every white and black one amongst you that `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib is my brother, successor, vicegerent, and Imam after me… O groups of people! Verily, Allah has appointed `Al¢ as your master and Imam and made obligatory upon all of you to obey him. Thus, his judgments must be effective and his words must be listened to carefully by all of you. Cursed is the one who will disagree with him, while mercy will be the share of the one who will believe him.

1. The addition to the holy verse is only explicatory; i.e. it explains the meaning of the verse. [*translator*]

So, listen to and obey him. Allah is thus your master and `Al¢ is your Imam. Imamate will then incessantly continue in my descendants from `Al¢'s progeny up to the Resurrection Day. Nothing is lawful except that which has been deemed lawful by Allah and His Messenger, and nothing is unlawful except that which has been deemed unlawful by Allah, His Messenger, and these Imams… Understand carefully the decisive verses of the Qur'¡n, but do not abide by the allegorical ones. None can explain these verses to you except the one whose hand I am holding, raising his arm up, and about whom I will now say: `Al¢ is now the master of every one who has taken me as his master. The duty of taking `Al¢ as your master has been revealed to me by Allah the Almighty. Behold! I have conveyed. Behold! I have delivered. Behold! I have made you all hear this. Behold! I have clarified. The leadership of the believers is not legitimate after me to anyone save `Al¢."

The Holy Prophet then lifted `Al¢ from the arm upward until `Al¢'s foot reached the knee of the Holy Prophet, who then added, "O groups of people! Indeed, this one is my brother, successor, repository of my knowledge, and my representative for all those who have believed in me. Such is the interpretation of my Lord's Book… etc."[1]

In his book entitled *al-Tafs¢r al-Kab¢r*, Ab£-Is¦¡q al-Tha`lab¢, upon explaining S£rah (i.e. Qur'¡nic Chapter) al-Ma`¡rij (No. 70), has reported the following:

On that day at Ghad¢r Khumm, the Holy Prophet called all people to gather around him. When they did, he took

1. Al-Am¢n¢, *al-Ghad¢r* 1:214-6.

`Al¢ from the arm and declared, "Whoever has taken me as his master must now take `Al¢ as his master." When these news spread out among people, al-°¡rith ibn al-Nu`m¡n al-Fihr¢ came to the Holy Prophet, rod off his she-camel, and said, "O Mu¦ammad! You have ordered us to bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Mu¦ammad is His Messenger; and we accepted that from you. You then ordered us to perform five prayers a day; and we also accepted that from you. You then ordered us to pay the *zak¡t* rate; and we accepted that from you. You then ordered us to observe fasting; and we accept that from you. You then ordered us to undertake the °ajj pilgrimage; and we accepted that from you, as well. Now, all these orders that we have admitted were not sufficient for you until you raised your cousin from the arm and preferred him to us, saying, ``Al¢ shall be the master of him who has regarded me as his master.' Is this your own desire or was it according to Allah's instruction?"

The Holy Prophet answered, "I swear by Allah save Whom there is no other god; this was certainly Allah's instruction."

Al-°¡rith then turned his face towards his animal, murmuring, "O Allah! If Mu¦ammad's words have been true, then rain us with a heavenly stone or inflict a painful chastisement upon us."

Before he could reach his animal, the Lord rained him with a stone that fell on his head and went out from his anus and he was immediately killed. Consequently, Allah the Almighty revealed these verses:

﴿سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ﴾

"A sceptic was asking about torment that is bound to happen..."

﴿لِّلْكَٰفِرِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُۥ دَافِعٌ﴾

"...to disbelievers; there will be no defence against it..."

﴿مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ ذِى ٱلْمَعَارِجِ﴾

"...[since it comes] from God Who owns the staircases leading upward..."[1-2]

5- VERSES OF WITNESSES

By the verses of witnesses, we mean the holy Qur'¡nic verses denoting that Allah the Almighty, in every age, chose certain persons to serve as leaders and witnesses to His Book for or against the believers; and He made these persons Imams for the people to judge among themselves according to what He revealed. There are also other verses denoting that the Holy Messenger is the witness on his community and there would be certain persons from among the Muslims to act as witnesses after the passing away of the Holy Messenger. Referring to these witnesses, the Holy Qur'¡n describes them as belonging to the Holy Messenger and that they would succeed him in witnessing for or against the believers. In addition to the Holy Qur'¡n, many authentic traditions of the Holy Prophet indicate that

1. Quran *Maarij 70/1-3.*
2. Al-Shabalnaj¢ has quoted this tradition from al-Tha`lab¢ in his book: *N£r al-Ab¥¡r f¢ A¦w¡l `Al¢*, p. 71. The same tradition is also mentioned by al-°alab¢, in *al-S¢rah al-°alabiyyah* 3:274, within the reports on the Farewell Pilgrimage.

these witnesses who are part of the Holy Prophet are namely `Al¢ and his immaculate descendants.

All these indications will be hereinafter clarified, yet briefly, within the following points:

A. Among Every Nation, Allah Had Witnesses

Many a verse of the Holy Qur'¡n has confirmed that Allah the Almighty appointed certain persons from every nation as witnesses to the people, and this divine norm is applicable to all generations. The Holy Qur'¡n thus says,

﴿وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِن كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا ثُمَّ لَا يُؤْذَنُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ﴾

"Some day We shall raise up a witness from every nation; then permission will not be granted those who disbelieve nor will they be allowed to argue back."[1]

Moreover, the testimony of these witnesses is not only for or against the nations collectively, but it also for and against all persons individually. Confirming this fact, the Holy Qur'¡n reads,

﴿وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ﴾

"Every soul shall come along; each will have a driver and a witness."[2]

B. Feature of the Witnesses

Many verses of the Holy Qur'¡n have mentioned the features of these witnesses. Among these features is that every witness must be contemporary of those whom he

1. Quran *Nahl 16/84.*
2. Quran *Qaf 50/21.*

will witness. In other words, with every generation, there must be a contemporaneous person to witness for or against them. Quoting the words of the Prophet Jesus, the Holy Qur'¡n says,

﴿وَكُنتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَّا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِى كُنتَ أَنتَ ٱلرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

"I was a witness for them so long as I was among them. When You gathered me up, You became the Watcher over them."[1]

Another feature of these witnesses is that they serve as arguments of Allah against His creatures; that is, Allah uses these persons as arguments against the people. They thus represent the criterion by which people's righteousness, wickedness, obedience and disobedience to Allah are weighed up. From this cause, they are witnesses to the divine Book, too, which means that the Book of Allah is embodied in their ideas and deeds, in the sense that the Book is appreciated, explained, and understood through them.

Allah the Almighty thus says,

﴿وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِىَ ٱلَّذِينَ كُنتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ﴾

"Some day He will call out to them and say: "Where are My associates whom you have been claiming?"

﴿وَنَزَعْنَا مِن كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا فَقُلْنَا هَاتُوا۟ بُرْهَٰنَكُمْ فَعَلِمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱلْحَقَّ لِلَّهِ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا۟ يَفْتَرُونَ﴾

"We shall drag a witness out of every nation and We shall say: "Bring on your proof!" They will realize that

1. Quran *Maaida 5/117.*

Truth belongs to God while whatever they were inventing has left them in the lurch."[1]

﴿وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ ٱفْتَرَىٰ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ كَذِبًا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُولُ ٱلْأَشْهَٰدُ هَٰؤُلَاءِ ٱلَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا۟ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ﴾

"Who is more in the wrong than someone who invents a lie about God? Those will be turned over to their Lord and witnesses will say: "These are the ones who have lied about their Lord."[2]

Among the other features of these witnesses is that they are the maintainers of the Book of Allah, because they perfectly apply to themselves the instructions and laws that the Almighty revealed in the Book. The Almighty says in this respect,

﴿إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَا ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ ۚ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا۟ لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا۟ وَٱلرَّبَّٰنِيُّونَ وَٱلْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا ٱسْتُحْفِظُوا۟ مِن كِتَٰبِ ٱللَّهِ وَكَانُوا۟ عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ﴾

"We have sent down the Torah containing guidance and Light. The prophets who were committed to [live in] peace judge those who were Jews by means of it, and [so do] the rabbis and scholars, because of what they sought to observe from God's book. They have even acted as witnesses for it."[3]

﴿قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِى وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِندَهُۥ عِلْمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ﴾

1. Quran *Qasas 28/74-5.*
2. Quran *Hud 11/18.*
3. Quran *Maaida 5/44.*

"SAY: "God suffices as a Witness between me and you (all) as well as anyone who has knowledge about the Book."[1]

﴿شَهِدَ ٱللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَٱلْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُوْلُوا۟ ٱلْعِلْمِ﴾

"God testifies there is no deity except Himself, and so do the angels and persons possessing knowledge."[2]

Another feature of these witnesses is that they believe in Allah and His messengers with the belief which is due to them and they have such faith in them that cannot be exposed to doubt or hesitation.

Allah the Almighty says,

﴿وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦٓ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلصِّدِّيقُونَ ۖ وَٱلشُّهَدَآءُ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ وَنُورُهُمْ﴾

"Those who believe in God and His messengers act sincerely, and serve as witnesses for their Lord, will have their earnings plus their own light."[3]

﴿إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا۟ وَجَٰهَدُوا۟ بِأَمْوَٰلِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلصَّٰدِقُونَ﴾

"Believers are merely the ones who believe in God and His messenger; then never doubt, and strive for God's sake with their property and persons. Those are reliable."[4]

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1. Quran *Ra`d 13/43.*
2. Quran *Aal-imran 3/18.*
3. Quran *Hadid 57/19.*
4. Quran *Hujurat 49/15.*

C. The Holy Prophet Witnesses for or against the Muslims of His Time

In many of its verses, the Holy Qur'¡n has described the Holy Prophet as witness and observer.

The Almighty says,

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّبِيُّ إِنَّآ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَٰهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا﴾

"O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness, herald and warner."[1]

﴿فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِن كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَىٰ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ شَهِيدًا﴾

"How would it be if We were to bring a witness from every nation, and bring you as a witness against such people?"[2]

D. The Next Witness after the Holy Prophet

Openly and plainly, the Holy Qur'¡n has stated that there is a witness for or against the Muslims to come after the Holy Prophet:

﴿أَفَمَن كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِۦ وَيَتْلُوهُ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْهُ﴾

"What about someone who has [received] an explanation from his Lord and to whom a witness from Him."[3]

The apparent meaning of the Arabic verb *yatl£* is to succeed and to come after. Thus, the verse means that the successor to the Holy Prophet takes his place in all things

1. Quran *Ahzab 33/45*.
2. Quran *Nisa 3/41*.
3. Quran *Hud 11/17*.

except prophethood, which was sealed by the Holy Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥).

Allah the Almighty has named this witness-successor not by name, but by indication and feature. So, He once confirms that this witness belongs to the Messenger of Allah, such as in the holy verse involved, and at another times describes him as having full knowledge of the Book:

﴿قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِى وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِندَهُۥ عِلْمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ﴾

"SAY: "God suffices as a Witness between me and you (all) as well as anyone who has knowledge about the Book."[1]

These two descriptions are not applicable to anyone except the Ahl al-Bayt; i.e. certain members of the Holy Prophet's family, at the top of whom is `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib.

As for the first description; namely, the witness-successor being part of the Holy Prophet, the Verse of Mutual Imprecation (*mub¡halah*; 3/61) clearly denotes that the Ahl al-Bayt, who are namely `Al¢, F¡§imah, al-°asan, and al-°usayn, are parts of the Holy Prophet. The verse thus reads,

﴿فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا۟ نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وَأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَل لَّعْنَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَى ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ﴾

"Tell anyone who argues with you concerning it, once knowledge has come to you: "Come, let us call our children and your children, our women and your

1. Quran *Ra`d 13/43*.

women, ourselves and yourselves together; then let us plead, and place God's curse upon the liars."[1]

Muslims have reached a unanimous agreement on the fact that this holy verse was revealed to express a manner of al-°asan, al-°usayn, F¡§imah, and `Al¢.

As stated by uninterruptedly reported traditions, on that day of mutual imprecation, the Holy Prophet took `Al¢, al-°asan, and al-°usayn by their hands, while F¡§imah was walking behind them. He then said,

"These are our sons, our selves, and our women. We will now imprecate and make the curse of Allah befall the liars."[2]

According to another authentic tradition, the Holy Prophet is reported to have said,

"`Al¢ is part of me and I am part of him. No one conveys on behalf of me except `Al¢."[3]

Telling the famous story of transmitting the verses of Allah's disavowal of the polytheists, reporters recount that the Holy Prophet had sent Ab£-Bakr to announce these verses to the people of Makkah and to warn them that no polytheist should attend the °ajj pilgrimage season anymore, no naked person should circumambulate the Holy Ka`bah, no one should be allowed to Paradise except one who has full submission to Allah in their inner self, any one who had an agreement with the Holy Prophet

1. Quran *Aal-imran 3/61*.
2. ¯a¡¢¡ *Muslim*, Chapter: Virtues of `Al¢; ¯a¡¢¡ *al-Tirmidh¢* 4:293, H. 3085.
3. Ibn M¡jah, *al-Sunan*; ¯a¡¢¡ *al-Tirmidh¢* 1:153, H. 2531; A¡mad ibn °anbal, *al-Musnad* 4:164-5.

would have it fulfilled to the end of its term, and Allah and His Messenger are clear of the polytheists. Three days after Ab£-Bakr's march for conveying this message, the Holy Prophet asked Imam `Al¢ to catch Ab£-Bakr, order him to return, and complete the mission in his place. As Imam `Al¢ did so, Ab£-Bakr returned to the Holy Prophet, wept, and asked, "O Messenger of Allah! Has anything bad been revealed about me?" The Holy Prophet answered, "No, only good was revealed about you. However, I have been ordered that none should convey the message except myself or a man belonging to me."[1]

As maintained by other authentically and uninterruptedly reported traditions, the Holy Prophet put al-°asan on his lap and declared, "This one is part of me."[2]

He is also reported to have said about al-°usayn, "°usayn is part of me and I am part of him. May Allah love him who loves °usayn. °usayn is one of the divinely-chosen grandsons."[3]

As for the second description; namely, the witness who succeeds the Holy Prophet must have full knowledge of the Book, it does not apply to anyone except Imam `Al¢ and his immaculate descendants.

An uninterruptedly reported tradition reads that the Holy Prophet said, "I am the city of knowledge, and `Al¢ is its

1. A¦mad ibn °anbal, *al-Musnad* 1:3; *Sunan al-Tirmidh¢* 13:164-5; al-°¡kim al-Naysh¡b£r¢, *al-Mustadrak `al¡ al-¯a¦¢¦ayn* 3:51-2.
2. A¦mad ibn °anbal, *al-Musnad* 4:132.
3. ¯a¦¢¦ *al-Bukh¡r¢*, H. 364; ¯a¦¢¦ *al-Tirmidh¢* 13:195.

door. So, whoever has a desire for this city must come to it from its door."[1]

About this tradition, al-°¡kim says, "This report is of an authentic chain of authority. Supporting the purport of the report, `Al¢ is authentically reported to have said, 'By Allah (I swear), I am surely the brother of Allah's Messenger and I am his successor, cousin, and heir of his knowledge. After all that, who can have a greater claim to him than I do?"[2]

The Holy Prophet is also reported to have said, "All praise be to Allah Who has deposited wisdom with us – the Ahl al-Bayt."[3]

The Holy Prophet is also authentically reported to have said, "Whoever is pleased to live my life and die my death, and reside in the Garden of Eden, planted for me by my Lord, then let him take `Al¢ as the master (leader) after me, and let him accept the authority of whoever `Al¢ places in charge, and let him follow the examples of my progeny after me, for they are my offspring: they are created out of my own mould and blessed with my understanding and knowledge; therefore, woe unto those who deny their favours from among my nation, who cut their ties with them; may Allah never grant them my intercession."[4]

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1. Al-°¡kim al-Naysh¡b£r¢, *al-Mustadrak `al¡ al-¯a¦¢¦ayn* 3:126.
2. *Ibid.* The report of Imam `Al¢'s words is decided as authentic by al-°¡kim and al-Dhahab¢. It is also reported by al-Nass¡'¢ in *Kha¥¡'is al-Im¡m `Al¢*, pp. 18.
3. A¦mad ibn °anbal, *al-Man¡qib*; al-±abar¢, *al-Riy¡¤ al-Na¤irah* 2:194.
4. Al-Muttaq¢ al-Hind¢, *Kanz al-`Umm¡l* 6:218, H. 3819.

The following authentically and uninterruptedly reported words of the Holy Prophet serve as a sufficient proof that the Ahl al-Bayt, at the head of whom are `Al¢, al-°asan, and al-°usayn, are the most knowledgeable of the Book of Allah and the true heirs of the knowledge of the Holy Prophet:

"I am leaving behind me among you the two things that, if you only hold fast to them, you will never be led astray; one of them is greater than the other: the Book of Allah, which is a rope extending from the heavens to the earth, and my progeny; the members of my household. They shall never separate from one another until they join me at the Pond. Now, consider how you all will succeed me in faring with them."[1]

Reporting the same tradition, al-±abar¡n¢ adds the following words:

(The Holy Prophet said) "…Never put yourselves before them, lest you will perish; and never lag behind them, lest you will perish, too. Never disagree with them in knowledge, for they are always more knowledgeable than you are."[2]

To sum up, the following points can be concluded from these verses of witnesses:

(1) The first witness for or against the Muslims is the Holy Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥), just as the prophets who came before him were the witnesses for or against their nations.

1. *Sunan al-Tirmidh¢* 5:329.
2. Al-Muttaq¢ al-Hind¢, *Kanz al-`Umm¡l* 1:168.

(2) Witnessing for or against Muslims is continuous after the Holy Prophet. So, there must be other witnesses succeeding the Holy Prophet and judging according to the Book of Allah, Who says in this regard,

﴿يَحْكُمُ بِهَا ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا۟ لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا۟ وَٱلرَّبَّٰنِيُّونَ وَٱلْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا ٱسْتُحْفِظُوا۟ مِن كِتَٰبِ ٱللَّهِ وَكَانُوا۟ عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ﴾

"The prophets who were committed to [live in] peace judge those who were Jews by means of it, and [so do] the rabbis and scholars, because of what they sought to observe from God's book. They have even acted as witnesses for it."[1]

Also, these witnesses succeed and represent the Holy Prophet in all of his affairs except prophethood, just as the Almighty says,

﴿أَفَمَن كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِۦ وَيَتْلُوهُ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْهُ﴾

"What about someone who has [received] an explanation from his Lord and to whom a witness from Him".[2]

(3) The witnesses who succeed the Holy Prophet have full knowledge of the Book of Allah and are parts of the Holy Prophet.

(4) `Al¢ and his descendants, in addition to their being the family members and progeny of the Holy Prophet, are the only ones to whom these two descriptions apply, for they are the most knowledgeable of the Book of Allah and they were introduced by the Holy Prophet as parts of him.

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1. Quran *Maaida 5/44.*
2. Quran *Hud 11/17.*

These are a small number of the many Qur'¡nic texts relating to the Imamate of Imam `Al¢ and his immaculate descendants. In fact, we have cited these Qur'¡nic texts only as examples, because the Qur'¡nic verses that exegetes of the Holy Qur'¡n and the authentic reports from the Holy Prophet confirm their revelation about the Imamate of `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib are too many to be cited exhaustively, taking into consideration the fact that the Umayyad and `Abb¡sid ruling authorities, for about four centuries, did not stop pursuing all those who would report even a single Prophetic tradition about the Ahl al-Bayt. Furthermore, the Sunni encyclopaedic books of the Holy Prophet's traditions were compiled under the shade of the unjust governments that prevented writing down even a single tradition in praise of or about the exceptional ranks of the Ahl al-Bayt, and violation of such ban was faced by the most brutal physical punishments and, as a result, the majority of the Holy Prophet's words about the Ahl al-Bayt could come to light.

The Umayyad and `Abb¡sid ruling authorities did not stop at preventing the spread of any Prophetic tradition in praise of the Ahl al-Bayt, but they also appointed some faithless persons who pretended to be righteous in order to fabricate fake virtues of the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt and ascribe them falsely to the Holy Prophet, although the falsity of these virtues was too clear to deceive men of understanding, because they were in violation of the Qur'¡nic verses and the authentic traditions of the Holy Prophet.

In this book, we have not intended to enquire about the Prophetic traditions on the Imamate of `Al¢ and his immaculate descendants, albeit this topic is one of the

most important subjects that were meticulously researched in details by our master scholars who compiled voluminous books in this regard. These books are worth perusing for those who seek further details on this topic.

To end with, we pray to the Almighty to establish us in strength with the sure word in this world and the world to come and to accept from us this modest work with the best manner of His acceptance. Verily, He is All-generous, All-hearing, and All-responding.

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- Al-Musnad: Ahmad bin Hanbal Alshaybani died (241H).
- Maalem al-Madrasatayn: Alsayed Mortada al-Askari (Contemporary).

- Manaqib Ali bin Abi Talib (Manaqib al-Ghazali): Ali bin Mohammad bin Mohammad Alwaseti al-Shafi'i known as Ibn al-Ghazali died (483H).
- Al Manaqib: Ahmad bin Hanbal al-Shaybani died (241H).
- Minhaj al-Sunnah: Ahmad bin abdul Halim Alharani bin taymiah died (728H).
- Noor alabssar fee Manaqib Al Bait 'ala al-Nabi Almokhtar: Moamen bin Hassan bin moamen Ashabalanjei.died (1298H).